

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

#### REMEMBERING RECENT NATURAL DISASTERS IN IOWA

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

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to remember that, in a time of widespread national disasters, it is important to remember those disasters that have already occurred this year and not forget the impact that they have had on people back in the great State of Iowa, which I am proud to represent in this body.

For most of us, May 25th was the day before Memorial Day. It was the day of my son's high school open house from his graduation, and our biggest concern that day was how much rain we were going to get. But shortly after all of our guests left, I started following a news story that would have profound implications for me and the people I represent back in Iowa's First District.

This wall cloud that is visible on the easel to my right was a wall cloud that brought a devastating EF-5 tornado to the citizens of Parkersburg, New Hartford, Dunkerton and Hazleton, killing eight people, causing widespread destruction in those communities and serious flooding in other parts of my district. And that was what transformed the summer of 2008 for many Iowans.

□ 2030

This wall cloud contained this powerful tornado and went right by one of my constituents' farms, that was Senator CHARLES GRASSLEY, who lives near New Hartford, Iowa. The effects of this powerful tornado can be seen in this photograph, this overhead shot of Parkersburg, Iowa, where nearly one-third of homes and businesses in the south side of Parkersburg were destroyed.

You can see here where the high school was destroyed. The folks in Parkersburg are very proud of the fact that four of the graduates of their high school, Aplington-Parkersburg, currently are starters in the National Football League, an extraordinary accomplishment for a town of less than 2,000 people. The widespread devastation as this EF-5 tornado went through Parkersburg will be felt for many years to come and illustrate the need for Federal emergency disaster assistance in times when people are at their most vulnerable.

To give you a better view of how individuals were impacted, this photograph shows the widespread destruction that leveled, literally, every home, office, business and building in the swath of the tornado pass through. You can see that the trees are completely denuded of any vegetation. Here you see people that are working hard to clean up an area where one of the homes was destroyed near where two people were killed.

I was very proud that when this disaster struck, my staff did a fantastic job of responding to the needs of every community wherever we could. This photograph shows me with my chain saw in front of one of the homes that was completely destroyed shortly after the tornado struck.

This is the basement of the home that I was working on and a family whose entire home contents were completely destroyed by the tornado. I kept holding up things that I found in their basement and asking them if they wanted to save it, and they said, well, that's not ours. This is common.

There were things that were found, that were taken out of Parkersburg during this tornado, in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, over 100 miles away.

On the front edge of the tornado, the town of Lamont had 8 inches of rain in a 24-hour period that flooded the community and caused widespread destruction to their infrastructure, including this bridge, all within the week of Memorial Day.

Then, as if that weren't enough, the week after Memorial Day, the town of New Hartford, which had been hit by this EF-5 tornado, was completely overwhelmed by flooding from Beaver Creek. The tragedy of these storms is that, as you can see in the background of downtown New Hartford, the hardware store has left town. The only convenience store, the Kwik Star, has left town and is no longer in business. The places where people went to get their basic necessities are being driven out by the implications of these storms.

The town of Elkader, Iowa, up in Clayton County, which is one of the most scenic parts of my district, had a flood predicted at 20 feet for a 12-foot flood stage. The river crested at 31 feet and overwhelmed the community, destroyed the grocery store, flooded businesses and caused widespread destruction to homes in Elkader.

Waverly, Iowa, in Bremer County, also suffered widespread damage due to the flooding. The same types of destruction can be seen in their downtown streets, which has enormous implications for infrastructure. Cedar Falls' utilities, completely overwhelmed by the flooding, and a railroad bridge in downtown Waterloo, where I live, will need to be replaced and has an enormous impact on the commerce at John Deere's Waterloo works.

The disaster response that this Congress made was immediate and swift, \$2.65 billion, but much more is needed to address the needs in the First District and the Second District and other parts of Iowa. It's time for Congress to act and pass a supplemental disaster assistance bill for all of the midwestern flooding and tornado victims and also addresses serious problems from Hurricane Ike and Gustav in our gulf coast.

The response initially to this disaster from our Federal disaster agencies was very encouraging, but there has been a backlog in getting the funds that Con-

gress has appropriated through the Federal agencies to the people in need in Iowa. The time to break that backlog is now.

We need to start freeing up the Community Development Block Grant money so that it can have an impact in these communities that I have been showing you here tonight. We need to free up other small business loans and other funding that should be getting to the people in need in Iowa, including the people of Cedar Rapids, who were devastated with the highest flood that they have ever seen and has 400 square blocks of downtown Cedar Rapids where homes and businesses were destroyed and need to be rebuilt.

That's why the crisis is now. The time to act is now. We need to take advantage of the widespread attention on people in need in this country and address their concerns.

#### 30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

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

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, we are here tonight as part of the 30-Something Working Group. We will be joined tonight by several members of the working group, including Congressman TIM RYAN from Ohio. I believe Congressman MEEK from Florida is going to be making an appearance, and anyone else who wants to join in that may be viewing us, certainly from their offices, is welcome to come down and join the discussion on a couple of issues that are facing this country and some things that are in the news this week and that we have dealt with in Congress this week.

Number one, I am going to start with the economy. I don't think anyone can pick up a newspaper, watch a TV or do any reading of any kind without seeing that our economy is in crisis right now. The stock market on this day went down 450 points after going down more than 500 points the day before yesterday.

We are in the position right now, as a Congress, and as a Nation, where we have some very difficult decisions to make. The administration came in and did their third major bailout of a major corporate institution this week with the AIG Insurance Company, and we are going to talk more about that. We are going to talk about the reasons why we got to where we are today.

There is an instructive part of this whole thing to take a walk down memory lane and to see what the economy was like 8 years ago and what the economy is like today, and to discuss how we got from where we are, where we were then, to where we are today.

We also have to talk about what's happening today, what is the crisis, what, exactly, is next. In some ways we don't know, but there are things that

we can do immediately to take immediate action to prevent this crisis from getting worse.

We are going to have a discussion about how we got here. We are going to have a discussion about what we do now. That might be the most important part. There is urgency to this.

Then we are going to talk about the future. What are the long-term safeguards that we can put in place to make sure that this never happens again?

That's, for many onlookers, the worst part of this whole process, the fact that we had safeguards in the market that were supposed to work, that were supposed to prevent this from happening, and those safeguards didn't work. Then, as it applies to the securities industry and some of the leveraging that was taking place in the market, we have the fact that it was a completely unregulated market.

It was a free-for-all, and it wasn't that there was deregulation that took place, in many cases these were markets that were never regulated to begin with. It was a laissez-faire attitude that this administration had, and the free-for-all that took place that led us to where we are today and how are we going to fix that, moving forward into the future.

So with regard to the economy, those are the three things we are going to do, talk about the mistakes that were made in the past that led us to where we are today, talk about what this Congress is going to do, hopefully in a bipartisan way, working with the administration, because there is nothing more important than getting this crisis solved. What are we going to do in the near term to solve the problem and move forward? Then, what are we going to do to ever prevent this from happening again.

To begin that discussion, I would ask the participants in the debate to take a walk down memory lane with me while we talk about where the stock market was 8 years ago. I think that now, now that we are in the crisis we are in, it's fair to compare periods of time. Let's compare the past 8 years to the previous 8 years.

In the 8 years of the Clinton administration, the stock market in this country went up 226 percent, 226 percent increase in 8 years. Now, what is that by the historical average? You say, I don't know, is that a lot, is that a little? What is 226 percent?

Well, the historical average is an increase every year of 11 percent in the stock market, and that's the historical trend. It doesn't matter if you have a Republican president and a Democratic Congress, a Democratic president and a Republican Congress, both chambers represented by the same party, regardless of that, over time, no matter who is in control of the White House and the Congress, the average annual increase in the stock market is approximately 11 percent. In the 8 years in the 1990s, and the economic policies that

we conducted in the 1990s, we had a 226 percent increase over 8 years. Pretty good.

What's happened over the past 8 years, because we have had a dramatic shift in our economic policies over the past 8 years. We are going to talk about what some of those policies were. That's part of the subject matter that is at hand with the Presidential race, the fact that we have two candidates with very different views on the economy.

One of them, Senator MCCAIN, has been a part of Congress for 26 years, was involved in the economic policies of the past and wants to continue the policies of the past 8 years into the future. Let's talk about what were the policies of the past 8 years, and what was the impact? We are talking about the stock market.

Well, the stock market today is almost exactly where it was 8 years ago. It's flat lined. It's gone up less than 1 percent. Now that's not 1 percent a year over 8 years, Mr. Speaker, that's less than 1 percent total over the course of the entire 8 years.

The previous 8 years the stock market went up 226 percent. The next 8 years, the current administration's time in office, it's gone up less than 1 percent total over that entire period of time.

It does not look like things are going very well moving towards the future. Hopefully that will correct itself, and we will see some gain in the stock market moving forward.

The point is, the decisions that are made by this Congress, and the decisions that are made by whatever administration is in power, do have a very real impact on our economy. They make a difference.

When you look at the fact that we have had 8 straight months of job losses, this administration, over the 8 years, is going to have the worst record of job creation of any presidential administration since Herbert Hoover. That's not a good record, 8 straight months of job losses. It does not look encouraging for the next several months. But it is the worst record of job creation over an 8-year period for any administration since Herbert Hoover's administration, and we all know what happened there. That's not good.

Our financial industry is in crisis. It's in melt-down mode. Now we can turn that around. We can take steps, working as a Congress and working with the administration to turn it around, and we are going to make the difficult decisions that need to be made to put our house in order and get moving in the right direction.

But when you look at what the mistakes were to get us to where we are today, let's take a look at the national debt, same deal. We will compare the previous 8 years to the current 8-year's administration, and I think that's a fair comparison.

When President Clinton left office, we had just had 4 consecutive years of

budget surpluses. Those surpluses were forecast as far as the eye can see.

The Congressional Budget Office, which is an entity which scores over a period of years what the expected surplus is going to be, predicted that over the next 10 years, beginning in 2001 through 2010, we would have a surplus of more than \$5.5 trillion.

I would ask the participants that are here tonight, and anyone who might be paying attention to this debate tonight, to think about what the discussion was in the presidential election of 2000. We are a little less than 7 weeks away from a major election here in this country, presidential election, and you see what the debate is about.

In the 2,000 debate between then Governor Bush and then Vice President Gore, the discussion was what are we going to do with this enormous surplus? We are awash in cash. We have a \$5.5 trillion projected surplus over what were then the next 10 years. And we've just had 4 consecutive years of budget surplus. So the discussion was, are we going to pay down the debt? Are we going to shore up Social Security?

What are we going to do with this money? Imagine what we could have done. We have had a debate on energy over the past several months, culminating with a vote last night in this House. What could we have done in the past 8 years with \$5 trillion if we had chosen to dedicate that money to finding an alternative source of energy, getting us off of our dependence on foreign oil?

□ 2045

There are any number of things that we could have used that surplus for. We could have nearly paid down the entire national debt. One of the largest line items in the Federal budget today is interest on the national debt, \$240 billion for 1 year. What could we do with \$240 billion if we had paid down the national debt and didn't have that line item in the budget?

Well, that was 8 years ago. We are not having that discussion anymore because instead of those four straight budget surpluses we had at the end of the Clinton administration, we have had eight consecutive budget deficits. And the parting gift that President Bush is going to leave to this country as he leaves office is the largest single-year budget deficit in this Nation's history, more than \$480 billion for 1 year.

So we didn't have the \$5.5 trillion surplus. No, we had a \$4 trillion debt over the course of 8 years and counting, unfortunately, because now, instead of surpluses with no end in sight, we have deficits and debt with no end in sight because of the economic policies that have been conducted over the past 8 years.

Part of the problem, among many problems that have developed with these policies, is the turmoil you are seeing in the market right now, is the stock market, the low U.S. dollar, which one of our previous speakers was

talking about. We are going to get to that.

I have talked about this before, and my colleagues in the 30-Somethings have heard me mention this before. If you had said to an economist as President Bush was taking the oath of office, "We are expecting a \$5.5 trillion surplus, but what would we need to do to have a \$9 trillion swing from positive to negative in the debt? What would have to happen?" That is going from \$5 trillion in the positive to \$4 trillion in the negative, a \$9 trillion swing. If you asked what would we have to do from an economic perspective if we were trying to have a \$9 trillion swing, what type of policies, well, any economist that you asked would have said that is impossible. You couldn't possibly mismanage the economy to such an extent you are going to have a \$9 trillion swing. Well, unfortunately, we have.

Now, I know there are those who will say, well, it wasn't the administration in the 1990s that were responsible for the enormous surpluses, it was the Republican Congress. And people who look at history might say it was President Bush the First who put into place pay-as-you-go budget scoring. And pay-as-you-go budget scoring is one of the factors that led to the record surpluses we had in the 1990s in contrast to the record deficits we had in the 1980s.

Unfortunately, one of the things that one of the previous Congresses did right after President Bush took office was to do away with pay-as-you-go. What is pay-as-you-go? Pay-as-you-go budget scoring is what we do in our home checkbooks, what every American does in their bank accounts, and what every business in America does with their balance sheet. It is very simple. You have to have money on one side of the ledger if you want to spend it on the other.

Unfortunately, we did away with that in this country after the 2001 turn of the administration, and that has led to decisions being made where nothing had to be paid for, just charge it to the credit card. Whatever spending you want to do, don't worry, we don't have to have an offset anymore because we don't have pay-as-you-go. So if you want to increase spending, put it on the credit card; somebody will take care of it.

The problem is that eventually the bill comes due. This leads me to where we are today; the bill has come due. Anyone who has seen what happened with Wall Street over the past several months and certainly over the past few days can see that the bill has come due. And, unfortunately, it is the American taxpayer that is now going to have to pick up the bill.

And because of the decisions that have been made to bail out the corporate executives and the big Wall Street financiers instead of middle-class Americans, it is middle-class families in this country that are going to have to pay the bill. It is middle-class

families in this country that are going to get that bill in the mail while we are bailing out the big corporate executives.

We are going to continue that discussion, but rather than give a monologue, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) is here, and I would like to welcome him to the discussion and yield to him.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I thank the gentleman, and I appreciate you coming down here and anchoring the 30-Something hour.

I think it is important as we are talking about the financial issues just over the last couple of days, and I think you laid it out pretty well, a 500-point drop and then a 100 or so increase, and then a 450-point drop today, these are markets that are so destabilized that we are losing companies that were established since before the Great Depression. The only financial house that seems to be left is the Department of the Treasury. And this has been because of the lack of regulation on the markets, period, dot.

It may be convenient, Mr. Speaker, to say we need to deregulate. You need law and order in order to build a capitalistic system. The capitalistic system doesn't come first. The magic with capitalism was that we had courts in place and regulatory bodies in place to make sure that contracts could be enforced, to make sure that investments were sound, not necessarily the decision that each person in the country would make would be sound decisions, not that every loan that they would take out would be sound, but there were precautions in place to make sure that this whole operation was stabilized and regulated.

And you look at what happened to the savings and loan industry in the 1980s, and you look at what is happening now; it is because there wasn't the proper watchdog in place.

I think putting the Republicans—as you stated earlier, there may be a difference between some of our friends on the other side of the aisle a few years back and the ones today—it is like putting a drunk in charge of the liquor cabinet, putting the Republicans in charge of Wall Street. I mean, let's be honest. Total deregulation.

The whole answer was, well, we will deregulate everything, and we will have competition. In Ohio, it was deregulate energy, and it led to an increase in prices. That's what has happened.

So we have this destabilized market here in the United States now, not knowing what is going to happen from one day to the next, losing businesses that were around since before the Great Depression. A long history of stability has been destabilized by the Republican agenda.

Now, look at all of the different things that have happened. I think this is the issue, the point. In 2000 the Republicans controlled the House, the Republicans controlled the Senate, the Republicans controlled the White

House, and look at what has happened. Look at what has transpired in the past 8 years with President Bush.

The only sign of any movement in another direction is when the Democrats took over the Congress a year and a half ago, with issues getting vetoed by President Bush. But look at what has happened over those years.

My point is, before I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania, is that we don't have to think about what America would look like with a neoconservative Republican agenda. We know. It has been implemented. And for all of our friends on the other side of the aisle to somehow erase history like you can erase your computer memory and think that the American people don't remember that they were in charge for all of these years and implemented their health-care policy, their energy policy, their education policy, their foreign policy, and where we are today on all of those issues, you don't have to believe me, you don't have to believe NANCY PELOSI, Mr. Speaker, you don't have to believe JASON ALTMIRE, these are two diametrically opposed philosophies on how to govern.

As you stated, in the 1990s with the Democrats in charge of the Congress and the Presidency, it passed a budget that led to the greatest economic expansion in the history of the country, 20 million new jobs. And you look at what President Bush did with the Republican Congress: Took us right off the cliff.

We were talking about in the Clinton years what we were going to do with the surplus. One of the debates that President Clinton pushed forward was save Social Security first. So he was going to take this money and put it into the Social Security fund so we didn't have all of these IOUs for all of these years.

Now the question in Washington and in Youngstown, Ohio, and in Georgia and in western Pennsylvania, here is the question: What if the Republican Party had their way when they wanted to privatize Social Security? Imagine, with everything that is going on in the market today, if President Bush and Senator MCCAIN and all of the House Republicans who were down here on the floor fighting for a Republican privatization scheme for Social Security, imagine if that last base security system that you have in place here, the American people have in place, was all in the stock market today? Just think about what a radical idea that is.

Mr. ALTMIRE. The gentleman sets me up perfectly because that is exactly the point I was going to try to make. When the gentleman from Ohio was talking about the policies of the past Congress and this administration and things like the energy bill of 2005, we have empirical evidence, what is the result when this Congress took action, passed, sent to the President and was signed into law? Well, gas prices skyrocketed, dramatically increased our dependence on foreign oil.

So what is the impact on our economy by the economic policies that were carried out under this administration? You could not have more of a stark contrast in evidence, the way that the economy boomed in the 1990s and what we are seeing here in the last 8 years.

As I mentioned earlier, the economy over the past 8 years is driven by the stock market, and the stock market is up less than 1 percent over 8 years, almost exactly today where it was 8 years ago.

The point I was going to make is we can lament, as the gentleman and I have done many times, the policies of the past and look for ways that we can solve the problem moving forward. But let's not forget a crisis that was averted by the American people, a policy that was thankfully not carried out.

This President, in the previous 6 years in Congress before the new session came in, tried desperately to privatize Social Security. President Bush, you'll remember, around 2004, 2005, and Vice President CHENEY traveled all around the country with their dog-and-pony show and charts and graphs talking about Social Security, privatizing Social Security, putting some of the money that is supposed to go, as it has always gone, into the pockets of senior citizens and instead putting that in the private market.

We already have ways to invest in the private market, and we certainly encourage people to do that. And one of the things that we are going to do moving forward is figure out a way to further incentivize private savings through 401(k)s and IRAs and all the rest. The point is that is not what Social Security is for.

If there was ever any doubt that was a good idea, and the American people certainly cast judgment upon that, imagine, I would ask my colleagues when they go back home and talk to their constituents, imagine if you had to retire and you reached the age at which you were going to start to claim Social Security at some point in the past 8 years.

If you were retiring in 2000 and that stock market had just gone up 226 percent over the past 8 years, boy, that was a great deal. That was quite an investment. It would have worked out just fine for you. But if you are one of the millions of Americans who would have qualified for retirement age in the past 8 years, maybe that wasn't such a good idea after all. You wouldn't have even got a cost-of-living adjustment. You would have flat-lined.

□ 2100

And that's certainly unacceptable with our Social Security.

I would yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. The point I want to add to what you're talking about is, what if this would have happened?

It seems like we always have people in Washington, if something major

happens, like a major insurance company or a major investment company or a major bank, it's like Washington, D.C. will step all over each other as to who's going to help them first, who's going to bail them out, who's going to give them something to make everything all right. And I don't want this to sound like we don't understand the ripple effect of what could happen if some of these entities aren't helped. We understand that.

But when it was the average person who made a mistake with their housing loan, hey, you're on your own. Pull yourself up by your bootstraps.

Well, Lehman Brothers, you pull yourself up by your bootstraps. Merrill Lynch, you pull yourself up by your bootstraps.

I'm not saying you don't need to take responsibility for your actions because you certainly do. But when we needed to help 10 million kids get health care through the State Children's Health Insurance Program, President Bush says we don't have the money. \$35 billion over 5 years. We spend \$10 billion a month in Iraq, but the President and a small group of radical Republicans in the House said we don't have the money for this. It's too much. It would be 3½ months in Iraq.

But if something like this happens where we have all this, a big major financial company, something happens, well, here we are, all of a sudden we've got more money.

Think about what the Republican Congress and Republican President did to our financial situation, not just how they destabilized the markets. I don't know if you got into this, Mr. ALTMIRE, before I got here or not. But think about what they did. They raised the debt limit five times. Maybe six. I may be missing one. Five times. They borrowed \$3 trillion from China, Japan and OPEC countries.

Now you want to talk about putting the next generation behind the eight-ball, go borrow \$3 trillion from our biggest competitor in China and watch them wipe out manufacturing in Pennsylvania, in Ohio and all over the industrial Midwest.

Don't regulate the markets. Don't invest in education. Make tuition costs go up 8, 9, 10 percent a year all over the country. The Pell Grant was almost meaningless. Student loans were 6.8 percent last year.

All of these issues add up to saying they weren't paying attention. Their philosophy of government just doesn't work. That's what this whole thing says.

We're joined by the gentleman from Colorado, the host of the Democratic National Convention. I yield to Mr. PERLMUTTER.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. I thank my friend for yielding. It's a pleasure to be here with the 30-somethings, even though I don't fit into that category and haven't for some time. But this subject is so important, what you two are talking about tonight.

We have a regime in place, in the personalities of George Bush and DICK CHENEY, that can't be described in any other way than radical because we've got to go back to some basic principles of our country, some basic values, the basic values that we were founded on, of thrift and sacrifice, of investment, of opportunity for all.

But instead, what we've seen in the last 8 years that this administration has pushed and promoted was a greed and gamble, immediate gratification, the theory that I want it now, and I'm not paying for it; my kids or your kids or somebody else is going to pay for it later.

To have these tax cuts and prosecute a war immediately turned this country's budget upside down. So you start with that failure. And we've been running behind ever since.

Then you forget about the lessons of the past. Now these guys wanted to reverse everything that's happened for the last 70 years, since the thirties. We came through the roaring twenties. We had our Calvin Coolidges, we had our Herbert Hoovers, and we paid dearly during the thirties because we understood at that point that we're going to give up a little bit of the upside so that we don't have the misery of the downside. But those lessons were lost on our friends in the White House.

They said, no. Let's not have any kind of regulatory, any kind of constraint on the system.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Can I add one point?

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Yes.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. DICK CHENEY said debt doesn't matter when he first got into office; debt doesn't matter.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Debt does matter. And my friend from Pennsylvania was talking about how each of us has to live with the debt that we develop, or our borrowing affects us. It affects this Nation. This Nation has been on a drunken stumble through Wall Street down Main Street.

Instead of doing the sacrifice and the thrift, we've been borrowing and spending. And I say we. George Bush, DICK CHENEY and the Republican Congress established this kind of an approach, and it has set our country back so that we are a Third World Nation, borrowing from China, borrowing from the Middle East, borrowing from our friends in Europe. And we really are behind the eight-ball because when they don't loan we have trouble, a la, we've had AIG which we've had to bail out; Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and on down the line. Bear Stearns.

We've had a radical regime. We can't have this radical kind of an approach anymore. But JOHN MCCAIN wants to subscribe to what George Bush and DICK CHENEY have been pushing on this country for the last 8 years. This country can't handle that anymore.

We have to have a change. And we have to have a future that really looks at new ways to develop our economy and understand that there have to be

some constraints. The free market isn't perfect. It works well, but it isn't perfect because we all have some tendencies that go against those basic principles of sacrifice and thrift and investment and opportunity for all.

So what I look forward to, and BARACK OBAMA intends to develop, is a new energy economy. That will put a lot of people back to work, and it'll help us so we aren't hooked on one product and subject to ransom when we go to the gas pumps.

We've got a lot of work to do ahead of us because these guys, in 8 years, have turned this country upside down. We can't allow it anymore.

We need a change and we need a new direction, and we need it right now. Luckily, we've got an election coming in 40 days or 48 days. And this country can renew itself, can rejuvenate itself. That's the promise of America, thank God. That's the promise for America.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. A lot of us were saying in the 2004 elections that if you re-elect President Bush, you will not recognize this country in 4 years. And sad to say, here we stand, here we sit in America thinking, you know, the stock market is under 10,000, unemployment is up again. We borrowed \$3 trillion. President Bush and the Republican Congress have borrowed more than any previous administration in Congress, combined. Still \$10 billion a month in Iraq, and no end in sight with what's going on. It's getting to the point where we can't recognize what we're doing, and it's critical what's happening to this country. It's sad what they have done.

Mr. ALTMIRE. It's worth mentioning, both of the gentlemen, I'm sure, remember, early in this session of Congress, in the beginning of 2007, we wanted to work with President Bush on a way to stabilize and shore up Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. We, as a Congress, went to the administration and said, look, there's going to be trouble down the road if we don't take action. Will you work with us on that? And President Bush said, no, I'm not interested in that and I won't support that. So away we went.

And then we came to the beginning of 2008, the economy starting to take a dramatic turn for the worse, so working together in fairness, in a bipartisan way, the House and Senate, with the administration, Republican and Democrat alike, and we put together very quickly a stimulus package to put money immediately in the hands of people who needed it, who were going to put it into the economy, get the economy jump-started, and it worked. If you look at the second quarter, we had an up tick in the economy because of the work that this Congress did.

Well, part of the stimulus that was not included, we, again, went to the administration and said, you know what? Can we revisit that issue that we asked you about a year ago? Can we revisit the Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac issue, because we really see trouble on the

way here if we don't act. Again we were told, well, we're not interested in including that in the stimulus.

And guess what happened?

Now there's a multibillion-dollar bailout of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac that's taken place. The government actually had to come in and take over those two GSEs.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I just love how our friends say, oh, this is going to be socialism. You try to provide health care for 10 million kids. It's going to be socialism. We can't do that.

Or if you try to provide any kind of preventative health care for women, it's going to be socialism. Don't you dare do it.

But then we're taking over major investment groups, financial groups, just taking them over. Here's billions of taxpayer dollars. We're now investors in all these things.

But we want to invest in the 10 million kids, Mr. ALTMIRE, and we don't have the money to do that.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Would my friend yield for a second?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. But that goes to another basic value that they have that just is wrong. They want to focus on the wealthiest 1 percent. They don't care about the 99 percent of hardworking Americans who are affected by this. It's hardworking America that are going to have to pick up the pieces after this administration. And really it's going to take all of us, in concert, together, pulling together, like only Americans can do, to deal with the shambles that we have, whether it's the way people were treated with Katrina, the fact that we have bridges falling down in Minneapolis, I mean, this is a time when we all have to pull together, and we have to look forward.

We can't go with the same old policies, the same old approaches of the Grand Old Party. It just doesn't work. We're in a new century, and it is time for some new ideas because we've got to move forward.

Mr. ALTMIRE. The gentleman reminds me of a point, which I meant to bring up, that I'm amused when I hear the discussion about, is JOHN MCCAIN's economic policy identical to George Bush's economic policy? Is he a third term of George Bush?

The fact is, readers of history will know, actually, if you go back and look at the economic policies of Warren Harding and Calvin Coolidge and Herbert Hoover, you'll find a lot of similarities in what happened over the previous 8 years, the mistakes that were made with the lack of regulation.

I talked earlier that it wasn't, for the most part, deregulation. It was non-regulation. We didn't take regulation away that existed. There was just never any regulation at all; very similar to what took place in the 1920s, leading up to the calamity of the Great Depression.

So I would ask readers of history and people who are interested in this sub-

ject, compare the economic policies that have led us to where we are today through President Bush and what Senator MCCAIN is proposing to those three presidents I mentioned.

And I would just say, before I transfer to Mr. MURPHY from Connecticut, or Mr. RYAN, if you wanted to comment, but I get asked a lot recently, about bailouts of these three big companies, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac and then AIG and Bear Stearns before; and what's the reason that we picked those while we let Lehman Brothers go under, and who's minding the store here, and why are these decisions being made, and who's next. What's the next shoe to drop is what you hear.

This is a systemic problem. This is not a problem with individual financiers. This is not a problem that Bear Stearns had all on their own or AIG had all on their own or Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. This is a system-wide problem that needs to be dealt with, and we can't continue to take a piecemeal approach and decide on a day-by-day basis who survives and who doesn't.

Well, Lehman Brothers, you can go under. We're sorry. But today we're going to bail out AIG, the next day.

We can't continue down that road. We have to address the systemic root of the problem to prevent this from happening. The first thing is to stabilize.

I'll go to Mr. PERLMUTTER, and then we'll go to Mr. MURPHY from Connecticut.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. I'd just like to make two points. And it is the administration that is choosing who lives and who dies. I mean, this really is about winners and losers, and this administration is choosing Bear Stearns, does not choose Lehman Brothers, chooses Fannie Mae, doesn't choose Merrill Lynch, chooses AIG.

□ 2115

It is not a congressional action. These are happening within the administration. They're making these choices. Now, maybe we would agree, but we're not given that chance. They're doing these things overnight.

Now, there's a Latin saying, "Res ipsa loquitur." Now, many might say, what the heck does that mean? It means, the thing speaks for itself.

What's happened in this Nation with these two guys, these two oilmen in the White House leading the charge, this country has turned upside down. And they may want to spread the blame to whoever. You know, Harry Truman had the old saying, "The buck stops here." Those guys would like to spread the blame. They're the leaders, and they've led us down this path.

JOHN MCCAIN wants to follow that Bush path. He's trying to run away from it now, but his votes were with the Bush administration over 90 percent of the time. We have to have a change.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And how many times do you hear our friends on the

other side say, "Government shouldn't pick winners and losers," "Government shouldn't pick favorites," you know, "Government has no business picking out this kid should succeed and this kid's not going to have the same opportunity," "Government has no role there"? Unless it's Wall Street.

Now, who do we need to help to keep things rolling? And as we've said, I'm not saying that this is necessarily right or wrong. What I am saying is this is a pretty complicated mess that we are in. And we're not saying that you shouldn't get the buckets and go down to the river and fill them up with water and throw water on the house that's burning. That's not what we're saying. What we're saying is you're supposed to have a fire code, and you're supposed to have fire trucks, and you're supposed to have, you know, gas in the fire truck and equipment for the firemen.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. And the best firefighters you can have.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And the best firefighters you can have.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. The Wall Street fire department is well-equipped. The Main Street fire department, it's gone underfunded and undermanned and unequipped for the last 12 years, particularly for the last 6 years.

We were very quick to go and help out our friends on Wall Street, but everybody sat here with their hands, you know, on their seats, tied behind their backs, when all these families needed a little help, when a kid who couldn't get an education in an inner city needed to access the apparatus to opportunity that all the rest of us had, when that small business that was about to go under because it couldn't find the health-care insurance to keep its employees on staff needed a little assistance. The little guys, when they needed the fire trucks, they weren't there. But when the big guys needed them, they got there.

And so I think you're exactly right, it's just a matter of consistency. Listen, government certainly can be an agent of help to people who need some assistance. But it shouldn't just be the big Wall Street firms. It should be regular, average, everyday families out there.

And to Mr. PERLMUTTER, just a word of warning. I know you're sort of new to the 30-Somethings here, but we don't use Latin. It's just a rule, and I hope you will take that under advisement if you join us from here on out.

Listen, I thank my friends for letting me join a little late here. I just wanted to maybe add one thought to this, and maybe you have covered it already. But I think people are searching today for the reasons, as Mr. ALTMIRE said, as to why last night AIG got the brass ring. Now, why did they get help and Lehman Brothers didn't and IndyMac didn't? Exactly why did they get help?

Well, part of it I think is that this is a company that does tremendous international business. This is, at some

level, a representation of American economic power throughout the globe, economic power that has been so greatly compromised by this administration as we have sold this country to foreign banks and foreign governments, that part of the reason, I think, that we have decided to choose AIG is because we are in such a precarious situation with regard to all of the foreign lenders and foreign governments that hold our currency, that hold American money through the \$9 trillion, \$10 trillion that we have given out in notes through the Federal debt, that we are now in a crisis position, that when an American firm that is a representation of our power across this globe comes under threat, we have to prop them up. Because if we are seen as economically weak around this globe, those countries are going to start calling their notes, those countries are going to start asking for their money back.

And that's when the real economic ruin happens, when the \$9 trillion that we have out to lenders across this globe, the record amounts that foreign governments hold, when they start to call in that money that the Bush administration and the Republican Congress sent out to them in record deficits and record debts, then we're in real trouble.

And so part of the reason I think we're standing here and trying to answer the question as to why AIG is at the top of the headlines is because we are trying now to make up for the terrible economic policies of the Bush administration that JOHN MCCAIN seeks to perpetuate.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. What I was going to say is we are in a predicament, and there is a crisis of confidence, both domestically as well as around the world, because of so many steps that this administration has taken, whether it's to go into Iraq, whether it's, you know, how we dealt with Katrina, all of this mismanagement and unregulation or nonregulation or anti-regulation of the financial markets.

The good news, the good news about our country, the good news about America and Americans is that, with good leadership, we can do anything. Times of crisis are also times of opportunity. With good leadership, we can have this new energy economy, we can innovate, and we can be ingenious, and we can imagine things that will really transform this country and this world.

That's the kind of vision that is necessary, and we're not going to see that with the other side. Those are old policies. Those are old answers. That's the old way.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. They had the opportunity to do it. They were in charge of everything.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. And they couldn't do it. In fact, they did just the opposite.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Just to highlight how radical of an agenda our friends on the other side have, the one thing—de-

regulation or lack of regulation, whatever the case may be, and then ignore the warning signs, as Mr. ALTMIRE stated, with Freddie and Fannie, ignore the warning signs about the mortgage crisis that's coming, and to then also to have as a part of your philosophy, deregulation, ignore the warnings, let's put Social Security in the stock market too. That is the Republican agenda.

We, with the 30-Something Working Group, started to fight President Bush's Social Security privatization scam. The first time I walked on this floor to speak was 4 years ago or 5 years ago when President Bush wanted to start the Social Security privatization, and then-Minority Leader PELOSI asked KENDRICK MEEK and I to come here and to combat it.

Now, can you imagine if they had won that battle down here, that monumental battle? Your parents' and grandparents' Social Security would now be sitting in Wall Street in a deregulated market that looks like the Wild West with a Starbucks, is what it looks like.

Mr. ALTMIRE. And when I go back to western Pennsylvania and they hear the word "regulation," small businesses and families, they get a little nervous, rightly, because in a lot of ways we are over-regulated in this country.

And I want to just, before we close here, I want to make sure everybody understands what we're talking about. We're not talking about the small businesses. We're not talking about the small corner bank. We're talking about the huge Wall Street financier, the conglomerates, these people who are getting the \$30 billion golden parachutes when the CEO gets canned.

The small businesses in this country, the reason you're having trouble in the credit market right now, the reason you may not be able to get loans for capital development and whatever else it is that you're working on is because the intra-bank lending, the staple of our economy, bank-to-bank lending, is frozen. The credit market is in crisis and it's frozen, and that's affecting small businesses.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. I just wanted to throw something on top of that, just to give you an example. You're giving one kind of example. Let me throw another one on, as to what it means when you regulate the small banks but you don't regulate the investment banks, you don't regulate the Fannies and the Freddie's of the world.

Local banks are still in business, largely, because they have government regulation—sensible regulation, some of it; some of it a little bit too much—that requires them to be appropriately leveraged. They have 4:1, 5:1, 6:1 leverage ratios. Fannie and Freddie had 60:1 leverage ratios, just unsustainable. The investment banks that went under, Bear Stearns, 35:1 leverage ratios, money they didn't have. So that's what we're talking about here.

We need to do something about the regulatory burden that is crippling a



lot of those small businesses. But we need to understand that it's really the big guys that need to be part of the conversation that the small businesses, the small banks have been a part of for a long time.

Mr. ALTMIRE. That's exactly what I want to clarify, and I thank the gentleman.

We're talking about asking the big Wall Street firms to comply with the same rules and regulations that the small business, that the corner banks have to comply with. Now, it's not exactly the same, and we understand that. But I understand the fear that it strikes in the heart of ordinary Americans when we start talking about the word "regulation." We are not talking about everyday Americans. We're talking about what happens at the absolute top of the food chain.

These large banks and institutions that you see right now that are teetering on the brink, the Lehman Brothers of the world that are no longer part of the process now, and the ones that we have to come in and bail out with an \$85 billion bailout at taxpayer expense, these are things we want to avoid. So that's what we're talking about. We are not talking about the small businesses and the corner banks.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. I just think one last comment I'd like to make is that there has been a transfer of wealth the likes of which we've never seen in this country. Whether it's to the big oil companies or to some of the Wall Street firms and to other nations, that has come out of the pockets of middle America.

And it is time that we come up with new ways to power this Nation. It is time that we, this country, instead of living on a borrow-and-spend philosophy, which is what has been the Bush administration's approach and is what MCCAIN wants to pursue, that we start remembering the values that made us so strong, of thrift and sacrifice and investment, and opportunity for all, not just a select few at the very top.

The focus has been on the top 1 percent. It needs to be on the rest of America. And when it's there, that's when we're strong. That's when we are that shining light at the top of the hill, the beacon at the top of the hill.

We are a great Nation, and we have stumbled because of bad leadership over the last 8 years. But come November 4th, things are going to change, and we will have a new direction.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I thank the gentleman from Colorado.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN), I thank Mr. MURPHY from Connecticut, and I thank the Speaker for allowing us this time to discuss the economic crisis in this country. I think it's safe to say that this is not the last time the 30-Something Working Group will address this issue on the floor.

And I would also say that I do look forward to my good friend Mr. WESTMORELAND, who is going to come after

us, and I'm sure he's going to have something to say. He sat patiently through the entire hour and listened to us speak, and I know he comes from a different point of view. And I would encourage those interested in this topic to listen to what he has to say as well. We've had many conversations about this and the energy issue and other things. So we look forward to hearing him.

## ENERGY

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

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, I don't know how many people have been watching the last hour, and I don't know that I can straighten it out in the next hour. But I do want to start out with something that is kind of elementary, I guess, to most people, but I want to explain the makeup of Congress. And excuse my penmanship.

□ 2130

The House consists of 435 Members. The Democrats have 235, and that's because of the loss of the late Stephanie Tubbs Jones.

The Republicans have 199 Members.

You can see that the Democrat number is larger than our number.

To get anything passed in this body, it takes 218 votes. You can see that the Democrats have more than 218 votes. In the Senate, 100 Members; Democrats have 51, Republicans have 49.

The Democrats have had the majority in Congress since January of 2007. And so what that says to me is that all of the stuff that I have heard in the last hour, Mr. Speaker, if they've got all the answers, why haven't they been brought to the floor?

Now I'm sure that's a question that many of us are asking because if they are in control and they've got all of the brilliant ideas that's going to save the world, then why haven't they brought them to the floor and put 218 votes up to pass it out of the House? That's got to be a question on a lot of people's minds.

Now in order to gain the majority, there were some things said and some things promised during the campaign cycle that led up to the new majority.

Here is one of their promises: "Members should have at least 24 hours to examine bill and conference report text prior to floor consideration. Rules governing floor debate must be reported before 10 p.m. for a bill to be considered the following day."

This was Speaker PELOSI in a New Direction for America, 2006.

Let me say that the sham of an energy bill that was brought to this floor yesterday was presented the night before to the Rules Committee at 10:45. This is just a little example of what we've been faced with and the fact that

the new majority won that majority by saying such things as this that the people believed that they would actually carry on.

I will tell you that this is not a rule. They did not make this a rule. This was one of those empty promises.

Let's look at something else. Speaker PELOSI in 2006 before they gained the majority: "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, including a substitute."

Since the new majority has been in in 2007 and 2008, they have had over 60 closed rules, which means that there are no amendments, you can't bring your ideas here and have them openly debated. The last energy bill that was here was one of those rules. I might add in the 109th Congress when Republicans were in control, we had just about half of that amount in closed rules.

Now here is the thing that I think that most people will get a grasp on, Mr. Speaker. This was by Representative PAUL KANJORSKI when he was in his hometown after becoming the majority. He was in his hometown, and he was asked about the Democrats' promise to bring back the troops from Iraq. And as he was talking—but this kind of relates to everything that has been said by them to gain the majority—before he said this, he said, "In our desire to win back the majority, we sort of stretched the truth and people ate it up."

Well, you know, that's something.

But then we got to the point where we're at today with the energy crisis. In 2007 when the Democrats took over, gas was about \$2.10 a gallon. Unemployment was 4.5 percent. Today, gas is over \$4 a gallon and employment is 6.1 percent, but yet they want to blame the Republicans. Now they're constantly blaming President Bush. I don't know, Mr. Speaker, but I have never seen President Bush in this body casting a vote.

In fact, if you've studied your government, you know that there's an executive branch, there's a legislative branch, and there's a judicial branch. The legislative branch is responsible for making laws.

Now if you go back to the first chart, you can remember that they have more than enough to pass anything that they want to in this body, and they control the Senate.

So what is the problem? We don't know. We want to understand why we are constantly being blamed. They talked about the economic problems. They've been in control since January of 2007. They passed a housing bill that gave Secretary Paulson the ability to do what he's doing with some of these bailouts. The majority of Republicans voted against that bill. So when are we going to take some responsibility and stop all of the blame shifting?