

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

THE REPUBLICAN REVOLUTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Appreciate that. And it has been interesting listening to my Democratic colleagues for the last 55 or so minutes talking about the deficit and what a problem that is for this Nation. I could not agree more. It was one of the things that frustrated me about previous spending through the 1980s, through the Democratic Congress, and then when we got to the first couple of years of the Clinton administration, we were still having deficit spending.

And then there was the Republican revolution. And Americans let their voice be heard. They wanted a change. They did not want to continue the deficit spending. They did not want to continue welfare programs that lured people into a rut from which there was no hope of ever returning, luring them in with government benefits and then giving them no incentives, no way to get out of that rut. It was just tragic.

And so Republicans gained the majority in November of 1994, came in in 1995 and, of course, there's a tug-of-war going on for credit over the balanced budget and the surplus that was created in the late 1990s. But it took a President and a Congress working together and the Republican majority to reach the surplus that was reached.

□ 1745

And that is what should have been done.

Yet, as we have seen in this town over a period of time, when people are in power long enough, they begin to think too much of themselves. They begin to think, well, it's okay if I spend it, and that is what we have begun to see eventually from Republicans, and we have seen it from Democrats. That is what brought about the Republican revolution in 1994, but it was beginning to show from Republicans in the early 2000s.

The Republicans did a great job in the late '90s in helping bring about a balanced budget because, after all, it is the Congress that is in charge of the purse strings. It is the Congress that is required by our Constitution to come forth with the appropriation bills. It is the Congress that either overspends or creates a surplus. So, in the late '90s, we got the surplus, and President Clinton, after the Republican majority, stayed true to what they were elected to do. They created a balanced budget and they created a surplus.

Then we came in to President Bush's term of office. Something nobody foresaw was September 11 of 2001. It was

devastating to the economy. It is an extraordinary testimonial that our economy came back as quickly as it did after 9/11. After an attack like that, especially so close to the financial center of the country, for most countries, it would have devastated them, but it is one of the things that makes me and has always made me so proud to be an American. In an emergency, we come together.

On September 12, I was so proud, yet hurt with so many Americans. At the time, I was a judge in Tyler, Texas, but on September 12, we came together on the courthouse square—hundreds of people, hundreds of people. By the end of it, we had all held hands, and we had sung hymns, and we had prayed together. On that day, there were no hyphenated Americans; there were just Americans, and we stood together.

With a tax cut, then another tax cut, we stimulated the economy, and record revenue like never before in American history flowed into the United States Treasury. Tax cuts were not the problem. They helped the economy. They helped us rebound. We should have headed for a straight depression after 9/11, but instead, there were tax cuts. It was bipartisan. We moved forward and we helped the economy. There was a lot of rhetoric across the aisle about not cutting taxes, but as it turned out, the tax cuts helped create more revenue for the Treasury, not destroy revenue for the Treasury. The problem was not the tax cuts. The problem was the spending.

Now, under Newt Gingrich's leadership as Speaker, we got to a balanced budget, and we got to a surplus. Then over the years and after hearing from people who were in power, looking back, there was some recollection and there came this feeling that, now that we are in charge as Republicans, maybe it's okay to spend like the Democrats were spending. They used to do it. Why can't we do it? The answer is because it is not good for the country.

I agree with my Democratic colleagues in that there was too much money being spent, but that is why in November of 2006 the Democratic majority came into being and took over the purse strings. So, for those who want to talk about the terrible 8 years of the Bush administration's deficit spending, for the last 2 years under the Constitution, the people in charge were the Democratic majority. So we can see the charge; we can hear the blasting, but the truth is that the Republicans spent too much leading up into 2006, and that is why in November of 2006, after 2 years of my Democratic colleagues across the aisle blasting Republicans for spending too much, they became in charge of the purse strings. President Bush could threaten vetoes, but if you go back and actually look at the debates that were held on this floor during those 2 years—2007 and 2008—when there was strong disagreement between the Democratic leadership's controlling things in the House and

Senate with the White House, except for military spending, the disagreements were generally of always wanting to spend more, not less, and in wanting to run up the deficit more, not less. So it rings a little hollow here on the floor when I hear this talk about 8 years of terrible, runaway deficit spending bills when it has been the Democrats who have been in charge for the last 2 years.

Then we had a very charismatic, wonderful speaker in Barack Obama, who ran for President and got elected. Mr. Speaker, as I had said on this floor in November or December, I did not support Barack Obama for President, but he is a man who conveys hope; he inspires confidence, and that is what this country needs. I like President George W. Bush. He is a smarter man than people give him credit for in most places. He is a good man, but he got talked into a bill of goods by the Secretary of the Treasury.

I have to agree with the comment I heard from former Speaker Newt Gingrich when he said he felt like Henry Paulson would go down as the worst Secretary of the Treasury in history, and I think he's right, but he talked our President George W. Bush into coming out publicly and fear-mongering and saying we're about to hit a depression. All the things Paulson had said the President confirmed. Oh, we could have bank failures. Secretary Paulson told us, once that first bank fails, there will be no stopping it. It will be a catastrophe. It's going to be terrible. That can be a self-fulfilling prophesy. The President is not supposed to say we're headed for doom and gloom. The President is supposed to be Presidential and say things like Franklin D. Roosevelt said when he said, "The only thing we have to fear is fear, itself."

We can come out of this. It would have been Presidential to point to 2001 and 9/11 and to say look at how we came back from that disaster. For most nations that would have been hit that hard financially, economically and especially to their souls with the loss of so many precious, innocent lives, it would have been too much to come back from but not for this country. We came back. The President could have pointed that out, and could have said, "We've got problems with banking. We've got regulations that need fixing. We don't need to have incentives for companies to go out and push people into mortgages that are more than they can afford so they can wrap them up in a security and sell them elsewhere and take their millions and billions of dollars in profit and then walk away clear and sell credit swaps which were really insurance but dance around the insurance regulations." Well, those things need to be fixed. We could have done it, but we still haven't fixed all of those problems.

Instead, we had a policy proposed by the Secretary of the Treasury, Mr.

Paulson: Just give me \$700 billion, and I think I can help things.

Well, I tried to tell my colleagues on the floor to read the bill. "Please read the bill." We've never done anything like that in this country's history since we've had a Constitution. In 1776, on December 27, there was similar power given to George Washington, but he did not ask for it; he hardly used it at all, and he gave it back timely, but that was not the case here. Fear-mongering got a \$700 billion bailout bill passed.

I might point out to my colleagues who've been in here, bemoaning deficit spending, to that point, that was the biggest spending spree by this country, outside the budget, ever in history. It's bigger than, I think, all but 14 or 15 nations' budgets for the whole year. As for this \$800 billion spree that has been voted for already in the House—it is supposed to come up again shortly in the House—if that were our entire economic spending in the country, I believe we are either above—just above or below Mexico if that were all of the spending for the country. It is an enormous amount of money.

I tried to warn people back in September, especially in our conferences: Please don't join with the Democrats in passing this terrible bill. There are not enough restrictions on spending. This is just giving a guy a slush fund to throw where he wants to. He can even spend more than fair value for anything he wants to buy. Now we found out he did. Now we found out that he did not spend all of the first \$350 billion, as I understand it. So we have been told, well, we need now Secretary Geithner to control things because he was a protege of Paulson's. He worked with him. He knows how this was being done. Well, to me, that's more of an indication that he should never have been approved for the office, never mind the problem with his certifying that he paid taxes that he never did until he was caught.

If he really believed in this country, if he really believed in the principles of this Nation, we did not need one man with that kind of authority. That was a terrible mistake.

One of my other concerns from September has been borne out. I told my Republican colleagues in private meetings: If we pass this, it really desensitizes Americans to just how much money \$700 billion is, and it did, because if President Bush had not come in and asked for \$700 billion, then there would have been no way that President Obama could have come in with a straight face and asked for more than that, but that is where we are because that is what has happened.

Now, what begins to occur when a Congress does not control itself and starts spending too much money, unlike the Republicans after they took over in January of '95 and on up through the end of the Clinton administration, we begin to see Republicans spending more. Even though the tax

revenue surged, it seemed to encourage the Republican majority to spend more. Yet, if you go back and look at the debates on this floor between that side of the aisle and this side of the aisle, in my first 2 years, we were usually fighting off requests for more spending from my Democratic colleagues than less spending. There were those of us on this side who would argue for less spending, but the White House would ultimately, over and over, it seemed like from just my impression, cave in to the Democratic demands and agree to spend more money and come closer to what the Democrat minority wanted to spend, and that would make it appear more bipartisan.

Then we get to this point where Congress says, as it is beginning to say and as this administration is beginning to say, we cannot trust the American people, and we cannot trust them to spend their own money. My goodness, they may not spend it the way we would want them to, and since we are so much smarter here in Washington about how to spend people's money, not our own, then we'd better not let them have their own money to spend.

As most people around here know, I proposed a 2-month tax holiday where money would just not be withdrawn for Federal income tax purposes and for FICA purposes. Some say, well, that may put a drain on the Social Security fund. There is no Social Security fund. If we had the proper nerve in this body, we would get a majority that would agree to pass a law that says Social Security tax money has to go into a Social Security Trust Fund, but we've not yet gotten a majority from either side that is willing to do that. I am still hopeful, and I still pray that that will occur.

□ 1800

But then I saw this quote from Senator JOHN KERRY that seemed to substantiate exactly what we were talking about, where he said, "But a tax cut is non-targeted. If you put a tax cut into the hands of either a business or an individual today, there is no guarantee they are going to invest their money. There is no guarantee they are going to invest their money in the United States. They are free to invest anywhere they want, if they choose to invest." That was Senator KERRY.

That's the attitude that kind of creates a problem in Washington because it seems like what is beginning to permeate again is this atmosphere of arrogance that says the American people are too stupid to spend their own money. Let us help them. We'll throw it to banks that are not going to lend more money. We're going to throw it over here to an insurance company that will take some nice trips. I'm sure if the taxpayers had their own money they might not take as nice a trips as these guys will be able to take with taxpayer money.

The problem is we don't have the money. We're having to borrow it.

We're having to print it, and you can borrow and spend your way into non-existence. The Soviet Union did it. Iceland has now spent their way into bankruptcy. It is not something that should be followed.

I hear my Democratic colleague, who I have a great deal of respect for, talking about in 2001 we could have fixed the AMT. We could have done away with the estate tax. Well, we should have done it in 2005 or 2006, my first two years here, but we sure didn't get more than a handful of Democrats who were willing to help, and so we were not going to be able to pass it through both the House and Senate.

No time like the present. You want to stimulate the economy, have a tax cut, because unlike some of the people here in Washington, some of the people in the House, some of the people in the Senate, we don't have to consider the American people as the problem. They are the solution. The American people that came together after 9/11 to pull this Nation up by its bootstrap, they're the solution.

Now, what gave me the idea of having a tax holiday, where you don't take withholding out for a couple of months, is actually when I heard some extraordinary figures about the spending and the promises that have been made. Let's see, we had an article from bloomberg.com, February 9, by Mark Pittman and Bob Ivry: "The stimulus package the U.S. Congress is completing would raise the government's commitment to solving the financial crisis to \$9.7 trillion."

This article says, "The Federal Reserve, Treasury Department and Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation have lent or spent almost \$3 trillion over the past 2 years and pledged up to \$5.7 trillion more."

Well, when I saw figures like \$8 trillion originally, now they're talking up to 9.7, I asked for a figure on what was projected to be received in individual income tax for the year 2008. The figure that I was provided was \$1.21 trillion from individual taxpayers paying their individual taxes. It doesn't include corporate tax or so many of the other Federal taxes that we have hammered people with but just individual income tax.

And what blew me away was, you know, now \$9.7 trillion in spending and guarantees and you could take a fraction of that, \$1.21 trillion, and tell everybody for 2008 you get all your money back; every dime you spent in individual income tax is coming back to you. Can you imagine the cars that would be bought, Detroit bailed out; the homes that would have been built, the homes that would be purchased.

You know, we were struggling a little bit in East Texas back in September of last year, but until the Secretary of the Treasury ran around like Chicken Little and talked the President, a good man, but he talked him into supporting his position, we were doing okay. But once they started screaming that the

financial sky was falling, instead of coming in and saying we've got to have immediate fixes to Federal regulations and incentives to do the right thing, they claimed the sky was falling, and that's a self-fulfilling prophecy. When the President of the United States says the stock market is going to crash, then it will.

When the Treasury Secretary tells us the stock market is going to crash on this Monday if you don't pass the bill to give me \$700 billion to play with, it's going to go down 777 points. I was surprised it didn't go down more than that with the self-fulfilling prophecy like was made.

But the problem is—one of the problems—the hope that I had from the hope that was talked about by President Obama, just a really likable guy, but he inspires hope and confidence, until he took over as President. And now what we're hearing is it's all doom and gloom, and that's been devastating.

You know, we have heard recently President Obama—and by the way, I'm tired of people saying, well, his inaugural address wasn't as good as it should have been. I thought it was terrific. It's just some people expected people in the audience to start swooning like they did at some of his other speeches, but it was a wonderful inaugural address. I thought this was a great line.

He said, "Less measurable but no less profound is a sapping of confidence across our land—a nagging fear that America's decline is inevitable, and that the next generation must lower its sights."

And he said, "We have chosen hope over fear." Now that inspires me. Those are great words, when he said, "With hope and virtue, let us brave once more the icy currents." After talking about the bravery and gallantry of Washington and his ill-equipped men crossing the Delaware, I thought it was a great speech.

But now, he's saying, "It's getting worse, not getting better. . . . problem is accelerating, not decelerating."

House Speaker NANCY PELOSI said last month, "Our economy, 'is dark, darker, darkest.'"

Our chairman, DAVID R. OBEY of Wisconsin, said, "This economy is in mortal danger of absolute collapse."

Senator CLAIRE McCASKILL of Missouri said, "If we don't pass this thing, it's Armageddon."

Well, an article in the Washington Times said, "With his fiery rhetoric, the new President runs the risk of terrifying consumers and investors, which could depress the economy even further. While the economy is bad, it is a far cry from Great Depression levels, when as many as 30 percent of Americans were unemployed, compared with the 7.6 percent now."

And of course, if you're one of the people that's just lost a job, it doesn't matter what else is happening in your world, your economy is devastated. But

if we provide the hope and the courage and the confidence that was so beautifully and eloquently discussed by our now-President when he was running for office, I think he can undo the damage of the laws of confidence and inspire people to get back to work.

Because what I heard in East Texas after September was, well, you know, we were going to buy a house or build a house or buy a car, but you know, we're hearing a depression is on its way, may be here, so we better hold up and not spend that money and see what happens. There are people with money. There are people with money abroad, and there are people with money in the country. Most people have lost a lot of money, but some still have money who could invest, but they want to wait and see what's going to happen because they don't want to be sticking their neck out at a time if the President and the Democratic leadership are going to be talking doom and gloom and help create a worse crisis instead of help get us out of it.

But this \$9.7 trillion in pledges, let me just tell you it's 13 times what the U.S. has spent so far on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. That's according to the Congressional Budget Office. Just staggering.

I thought it was interesting, let's see, here's a quote, "Mr. Hope has to be careful not to become Dr. Doom," said Frank Luntz, a political consultant and author of the book 'Words That Work: It's Not What You Say, It's What People Hear.'"

Mr. Luntz went on, "The danger for him is using the Jimmy Carter malaise rhetoric, particularly for Mr. Obama, who was elected because people thought he was the solution. There's only so much negativity they will tolerate from him before they will feel betrayed."

That's true. I mean, we need our President to step up and not be talking doom and gloom but encourage us.

It's really reassuring to hear people across the aisle, as we did for the last hour, talking about the problems of deficit spending. Friends, I'm with you. Mr. Speaker, that's what we need. We need people who understand that the deficit spending has created problems. So you don't come in to fix a problem by doing more of what created the problem. You know, it's like that stupid joke where a guy goes into the doctor and says, "It hurts when I do that," and the doctor says, "Well, don't do that." If you're hurting the country by deficit spending, don't do that.

Now, if it's going to take a little tax holiday to help instill that confidence, that's what we can do, and it wouldn't take \$1.21 trillion, which is all the individual income tax for a whole year. But there have been independent studies. Now Moody's Economy had one that said, of all the tax proposals, the one that increases the GDP in 1 year more than any other proposal is the tax holiday proposal.

And people across America are getting that, and they're picking up on

this arrogance that's reemerging. Some Republicans had it when we were in the majority. Some Democrats had it before Republicans won the majority, and that's why they won the majority in November of 1994, and now it's picking up in Washington again: American people are too stupid, we have got to throw all this money away instead of letting them have it.

But that's why I would like to encourage the American people, Mr. Speaker, it would be so helpful if people across America were to let the leadership hear, and I've got the names here of the Speaker and of the minority leader and, in the Senate, the majority leader, Senator HARRY REID, and of the minority leader, MITCH MCCONNELL, because if Americans will let their representative and their senators know and then let these people know—I've got the Capitol switchboard number here—if they were to let those people know, cut out the arrogance, let us have a tax holiday for at least a couple of months, it will be a whole lot cheaper than even Geithner's plan that's supposed to come out tomorrow to spend \$350 billion. And apparently he's got ability and authority to spend even more than that because what we've heard is that you know, gosh, Secretary Paulson didn't spend all the \$350 billion so he's got more of that he can spend.

So, if we were to have a 2-month tax holiday of both FICA and individual withholding, the figures that we have been provided would be that it would cost around \$334 billion for 2 months, and that could be made up by the money that's already been allocated.

But we did a poll in East Texas to find out how people would spend their money if they got a 2-month tax holiday, and we encouraged them to look at your check stubs, look at how much withholding is taken out of your check each month for 2 months, see what that huge total is, and then let us know what you would do with the money. These were the major answers we got: Invest in small business; invest in the stock market. The most common answer we got is that that would help us buy a home, someone to build a home. Let's see, number one answer is, if you combine them all together, combine these as a group, would be to catch up on their mortgages and pay off credit cards.

And perhaps that's what Senator KERRY's talking about. Maybe they wouldn't invest their money. Maybe they might put it in the bank. How about paying off their credit card? We heard Secretary Paulson and now Secretary Geithner saying we do need more lending in this country, and that's why we need this money, to help shore up the credit business, create more lending.

□ 1815

Well, what we've heard from people is that if you give us our withholding for 2 months, we will catch up on our

mortgage, we'll pay off our credit cards, and we'll have some money to go eat out on. And that was another big answer, "Go out and eat." Some said, "Just to shop." Some said, "To finally take a trip and have fun with the family," something they haven't been able to do for a while.

But that would help America.

And even if these people that some deemed too stupid to know how to use their own money that they earned in their own paycheck, if they put it in the bank—maybe that's not what Senator KERRY was thinking about in the way of investment—but if it increases confidence in our economy, let somebody put some money in the bank. It would be good for them, more money in the bank, more money to loan.

But all of this talk about doom and gloom has got people scared. And now we're hearing there's a bill that would allow bankruptcy judges—we had testimony on it in the Judiciary Committee—that it will allow, for the first time, bankruptcy judges to drop the principal on a mortgage, on a home loan mortgage. That's really interesting.

And then one witness said, "Well, but they've been able to do it in some places where judges could lower the principal." And on being pressed, he had to admit that actually in those rare cases, the debtor was required to pay the extra principal that was reduced within 5 years, so nobody hardly ever does that because most people who file bankruptcy can't pay that kind of money for principal that quick.

Anyway, again, Mr. Speaker, if people wanted to get across to the leadership in this Congress that has the purse strings—not the President—this Congress, House, Senate, by Constitution have the purse strings, then they would be amazed at what they would see happen if people across this Nation—Democrats, Republicans, bipartisan—let these folks know how they feel about either Washington squandering their money—because that's what I see what's been done—or the people that earned it actually getting to spend that money.

So what are some other solutions? Well, I would have hoped we would hear these things from the President because that's where you can instill hope so easily. You've got the bully pulpit. But that's not what we've heard so far.

One of the things that some of my Republican colleagues and I have been trying to get it across—we tried to get it across in the last Congress the last 2 years—that there is so much that would boost our economy if we would use our own resources. We have energy resources. We have been so blessed with so much in the way of natural resources, like no nation in the history of the world. What a blessing we have had.

You know, some complain that there are not enough trees, but if you look and you do your little investigation—like those of us on the Resources Com-

mittee have heard and read about—actually there are more trees in the United States of America right now than ever in history; more than 100 years ago, more than 200 years. We have been so much more cautious and so much better stewards about this great land that we've been blessed with. But we can use the resources we've got.

Now, on energy, we got notice we've got a hearing this week and a couple more coming up about why we ought to cut off and renew the moratorium on offshore drilling on the Outer Continental Shelf drilling. Well, the people need to remember what they did in September because in September, they let Washington hear from them, and those who are in the Democratic leadership at the time realized—this is the way it appears to me—they realized if we extend the moratorium on offshore drilling right now when people are paying so much for gasoline and natural gas and heating oil, they may throw us out of the majority come November, so let's hold off on that.

And there were rumors, and I don't like to give any credence to rumors. And there were rumors back at the time that gee, there were some in leadership, Democratic leadership, who were telling the environmental folks—who were so way far off the left that they don't think there is any way for man and energy to work together and still have a good environment—but they didn't want the moratorium dropped, but they seemed to be comforted. They quit making noise. For some reason, they began to think that, gee, when the Democrats got past the November election and stayed in the majority, the moratorium would be forthcoming.

Well, low and behold, here we are in February and here we've got three hearings scheduled on why we should have a moratorium on the offshore drilling again.

Just incredible.

Looks like the American people, Mr. Speaker, are going to have to let the leadership know again just how they feel about that because we're going to see natural gas, heating oil, gasoline, we're already seeing that come back up. And there is a meeting now posted for OPEC where they're going to talk about cutting production so that we are forced to pay more. We knew this was coming. And yet we had the resources to avoid having to send all of this money overseas.

You know, you look at what we've got here. We have more coal than any nation in the world. I don't want to see black smoke creating all these terrible air problems that have happened in our country in the past, but the air's been cleaned up. You know, you'd fly into some of the cities that used to have a big brown smog cloud over it. We've done so much better. We're doing so much better. We're doing better in that area. And I don't want those days to return where there's black smoke bil-

lowing up. But most of the smoke you see now is steam.

But we could use clean coal techniques. We could use coal-to-liquid technology. We could use more wind as Boone Pickens advertised so much about.

And, you know, if France can make nuclear energy work and have over 70 percent of their energy come from nuclear without a major incident, with American ingenuity, do we not think we could do the same thing?

Natural gas. Now, natural gas is an incredible asset—as my friend, Congressman VERN EHLERS, likes to talk about—that is such a valuable commodity. It is feedstock for so many things. So many of the products that we use and save people and doctors and just across the business spectrum, across our own comfort spectrums, we have products that were derived using natural gas as a feedstock.

And we may have more natural gas anywhere. The estimates I've read indicate probably the second-most natural gas in the world, if you're allowed to go off the Outer Continental Shelf—especially around Florida—but I didn't realize until we got to Congress that we have oil and gas reserves up and down the west coast, California up through Washington. We've got it from Maine down to Florida. And the gulf coast is rich with it. In Texas, off the Texas gulf coast, Louisiana gulf coast, a couple of the others have some rigs. I mean, we are producing oil and gas as fast as we can to try to be a team player and help this country.

But we need some help. We cannot afford for States to be so selfish that they don't want to see a rig. And to me at night, looking off the Texas coast, it's kind of pretty to see a light or two sparkling out there. And we also know if they are producing toxic problems, then we need to shut them down. I'd be leading the charge to do so.

What we saw after Katrina, this terrible hurricane that hit at a level 5 out on some of these platforms, we didn't have any leaks. The technology is amazing. They shut those things in. Some of them were totaled as platforms. It was a level 3 when it hit Louisiana, but it was a 5 and devastated some of those platforms. No leaks.

When I was growing up, we'd hear people say, you know, we can't have platforms out there off our Texas gulf coast because if we do, it will destroy all fishing for all time in the Gulf of Mexico off our coast. Well, what they found was when they put those platforms out there, they become artificial reefs. And now many times when you want to go fishing, people will encourage going out around these platforms because the fish have adapted so well.

So there is so much we could use. The hydrogen technology, water, solar. I filed a bill last Congress, and I intend to file again—never got to the floor—but I think for the long term, solar provides the cleanest, best potential

for energy in the universe. What an incredible source. We just need to figure out better ways to use it.

We have never come up with a way to hold electricity. We can hold DC current, we can hold power, we can hold energy. Some have figured out if they pump water up into a high reservoir during off-peak times, they can let it flow downhill, turn generators, produce more electricity during peak times. And that's storing energy potential up there, but still we haven't found a way to store electricity.

I know some scientists say we'll never be able to do that. Some say there may just be a way. So my bill would provide a \$300 million prize for anybody who comes up with a way to store megawatt electricity for 30 days without losing more than 10 percent of it. Some say it can't be done. And the truth is, if we put a prize out there and it started getting these brilliant intellects in this country to focus on that and they were able to do it, they would make so much more money than \$300 million, they would be set.

But it's the Congress' job to inspire people to reach beyond themselves—not to lure in a rut—but to reach beyond themselves. And I think one day, solar will be our ultimate energy answer. But in the meantime, we could be completely energy independent if we just use what we've gotten.

And when we hear all of these estimates about job loss—and we know that every report of job losses, it isn't just 50,000 or 500,000; it is each individual case creating a devastating hurt: economically, mentally, emotionally, families hurting.

Well, so what alternatives do we have to giving another \$800 billion on top of the \$700 billion that we've already given to the Federal Government? What kind of alternatives are there?

Well, how about using the energy that we have? Because when we start looking at all of our resources—and we got this thick shale up around Utah, Wyoming, part of Colorado—we've seen estimates that range anywhere from one trillion to three trillion barrels of oil that can be obtained from that thick shale. We've seen estimates that there may only be one trillion left in the entire Middle East.

We've also seen the report that if we open up ANWR to production in Alaska, to oil and gas production, that we could cut 70 percent of our usage of Middle East oil and gas. Wouldn't that be wonderful? We could be so much more relaxed.

But the thing about using our own energy that goes beyond not sending money to other countries—some of which really don't like us; some of which may allow the growth of terrorists and training of terrorists within their boundaries—we cut that off. We use what we have.

So it was incredible to see this report about the jobs that would be created from development of Alaska's oil and gas reserves.

□ 1830

That's right, jobs that would be created from use and pursued development and production of oil and gas in Alaska. There would be new jobs in all 50 States. We have heard President Obama say first, as I understood him, we were going to have—he was going to create 3 million new jobs. Then, I believe I heard him say today, actually, "We are going to create and save 3 million new jobs."

Well, I liked it better when he was saying he wanted to create 3 million new jobs because once you say we're going to save a job, there's no way to either disprove or prove that you have saved a job, most of the time. So you say you saved a job. How can we know? You say you created a job. We know you create a job if it's created.

Well, how about this? Alaska's oil and gas resources, if we were allowed to pursue them properly, as President Jimmy Carter, back when he was President proclaimed should be done. He proclaimed ANWR, as he set that section 1002 off because nothing really can grow there, nothing can live there. What a perfect place to have a small footprint to help us with our energy needs until I say we get to solar. Maybe we can do hydrogen and water. That would be fantastic.

Here are the jobs that would be created. In California—new jobs—334,000 new jobs; Washington State. Right now, actually, in Washington State they have a huge unemployment problem. There's 234,000 people out of work in Washington State. If we allow Alaska to produce their oil and gas, it creates 139,089 new jobs.

Pennsylvania. You wouldn't have thought maybe Pennsylvania would do so well. But there are some people struggling in Pennsylvania, looking for jobs. There's 347,800 people out of work in Pennsylvania, according to this report. The new jobs would be created just from opening up Alaska's reserves. Wouldn't cost us any money. In fact, we could make money off of leasing that property—142,529 jobs.

New York State. You might not figure they would benefit with new jobs from opening up Alaska's oil and gas. But, 93,356 jobs. New Jersey, 39,136 jobs; Illinois, 40,609 jobs.

The overall gain, 1,074,640 jobs from Alaskan oil, and 1,135,778 jobs from pursuing Alaska's natural gas reserves. Overall, 2,210,418 jobs. That would be kind of nice. We wouldn't even have to spend any money. We'd get money in from that. We'd make revenue off of that.

Yet, what did we hear? How is the Federal Government now going to help us? Well, before the Bush administration went out—and it takes a long time to put Federal lands up for lease for oil and gas production because there are battles galore. We heard in the last Congress I forget how many—60 million acres or something—that are currently under lease and not being produced or utilized. Interesting. Nobody ever tells

you how many of those acres are tied up in lawsuits, because that is the thing that happens.

If we created an Outer Continental Shelf drilling bill and didn't have a speedup on litigation, with a quick turnaround time so we could get answers on whether it was lawful or not, then it would be successful dragging them out like they have so many of the millions and millions of acres that are tied up now in litigation that are not being able to be utilized.

But the Bush administration knew that would create jobs so they put some leases in the western United States up for lease. That was a good thing. They put it up for bid because the high bidder gets the lease. And they awarded the bids, and the checks came in from those individuals. And as the checks came from those individuals, so did President Obama's administration.

So, here's an article from the AP—just a little quote from it—and this is about Interior Secretary Ken Salazar has had the U.S. breach its promise on leases already studied. The bids were offered, the bids were awarded. The checks were sent in. They were paid. Here's the story from the AP last week.

Secretary Salazar says he is scrapping the lease of dozens of parcels of Federal land for oil and gas drilling in Utah's Red Rock Country. Salazar says the Bush administration rushed an auction in December of some of the country's most precious landscapes around national parks and the wild Green River.

We have rigs in State parks, all kind of parks around Texas, and we welcome them. They produce jobs, they help the economy. They put kids in nicer schools. They do extraordinary things with a tiny, tiny footprint that we demand is done right.

Salazar on Wednesday ordered the Bureau of Land Management, which is part of the Interior Department, not to cash checks from winning bidders for the parcels at issue in a lawsuit filed by environmental groups. A Federal judge last month put the sale of the 77 parcels on hold. Now Salazar is saying he won't sell any of them, at least not until the Obama administration has a chance to take a second look.

Well, those are jobs that aren't saved. Those are jobs that are being lost. And they are jobs that are not being utilized, and this country deserves better.

I see my friend from Utah here. I would yield to him if he has a comment on that.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. If you have, Mr. GOHMERT, the gentleman from Texas, just a moment on the last chart you brought up, because it does deal with my State. And I appreciate you bringing that issue up because it was one of the surprises we had when the new Secretary of Interior, Mr. Salazar, did indeed take off from potential leasing those particular areas.

What I'd just like to speak to you specifically about this particular issue is when he said that the Bush administration rushed to sell these leases, they were in a hurry to get them done, nothing could be further from the truth.

These leases are part of a resource management plan which had been in effect for 25 years, and we were trying to update them for the first time in 25 years. Each one of these leases went through 7 years of study, hundreds of town meetings, thousands of inputs from individuals. Now, I'm sorry. If 7 years is a rush to judgment, something is wrong somewhere.

What we are talking about here are decisions that were made not only by Federal BLMA employees as to the viability of these lands, but also the State of Utah. So the State Fish and Wildlife chairman was in charge of signing off on all this. The State Historical Preservation officer was in charge of signing off on all these particular leases.

When they were announced after 7 years of study and, might I add, there was not one acre added to this management plan that had been in the management plan 25 years. The Park Service objected to a few acres around the national parks. Those were withdrawn by the Bureau of Land Management.

So these acres are not around those national parks. These acres—77 leases—these acres were the product of a lawsuit by special interest groups that were pulled off the table by Secretary Salazar, not because it was a rush by the Bush administration, but it was a 7-year planning session. These are all miles away from any kind of natural splendor in the State of Utah. And that is why it is so astounding.

I am amazed that if you actually look at the number of leases that were done—you probably cannot see this on the camera—but, starting with the Clinton administration, every year we offered 3,300 leases; 3,800 leases, 30,000 leases, 3,300 leases. And, when Bush took office, the number went down to 25, 16, 14, 15.

The average number of leases in the 7 years of the Clinton administration was 2,900 year. In Bush, 1,900 per year. The Clinton administration offered more opportunity for exploration of natural resources than the Bush administration did. And when we say this is a rush to judgment, he was paying off rents at the last minute, it is flat out not true.

What happened is the Secretary of the Interior in a knee-jerk reaction to special interest groups pulled off land that should never have been pulled off because it was land that had been thoroughly vetted, and the only changes in the land plan was to make it more environmentally sensitive as to landscapes, noisescapes, lightscapes, and disruption of the surface property.

This is my territory. I know about it. And I am incensed that this was done, because there is no rational reason for it.

I yield back to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. GOHMERT. I appreciate my friend from Utah. It's one of the reasons I love my friend from Utah. When I saw my friend on the floor, I knew that you would be able to enlighten even further.

So, it looks like what we could suggest for our Interior Secretary Salazar, since he thought these leases were, as he says, some of the country's most precious landscapes around national parks and wild Green River, we will just have to encourage him to discover a little more about America so that he will understand what it is before he kills more jobs, hurts more families, as he does.

My time is wrapping up. What occurs to me when we see these incredible resources that would just, if we did the Outer Continental Shelf and Alaska's oil and gas, which Alaska, the vast majority want to pursue, we'd have the 3 million jobs. It wouldn't be saving the jobs. Those would be saved. But we would have 3 million-plus plus new jobs.

What I thought about is a sweet man—I just loved him to death—from Nacogdoches, Texas. Bob Murphy. He passed away a few years ago. But I used to love to hear him talk.

And he told a story one time back when I was in high school, the first time I heard him, and he said that there was a fellow that came to have coffee with him at the coffee shop every other day. And every time he would come in, he'd order coffee. And the waitress would pour his coffee. And he would take the sugar jar and just pour it. And you knew that at least a third of the cup was full of sugar, and then he would never stir it. And he would drink it, they would add more coffee, and he'd add more sugar, and never stir.

Finally, it got the best of Bob. And he said, Look. Why don't you just stir what you got? He said, Bob, if I stirred all that sugar, it would make me sick.

Well, here in the United States, if we stir what we got, if we use these incredible resources with which we have been so blessed. We provide jobs. We have money here at home that we don't have to send to other countries. We provide for ourselves, we provide for the common defense, we provide people the opportunity to reach their God-given potential.

We have been so blessed. It's ashamed to keep giving back and saying, No, thank you, God. We don't want these gifts. We are not going to use them.

It's time to use what we have got, stir what we have got. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the time. I yield back.

OMNIBUS LAND BILL of 2009

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. I appreciate the opportunity of being here. I appreciate

being able to catch the last of the gentleman from Texas so I could add in, especially as he talked about my home State.

It's unusual because, to be honest, most of everything we are talking about in this Nation and in Congress is the stimulus bill. Everything is about the stimulus bill. And it's appropriately so.

It seems to those who are cynical here in Washington that we are trying to push the stimulus bill through as fast as possible in, as the cynics would say, an effort to try and stop people from seeing what is actually in there, because the more we look at it, the more problematic the entire bill comes.

But today I wish to talk about a different bill, as ominous as the stimulus bill. In fact, it is called the Omnibus Land Bill of 2009, which will be coming up this week. And if you think the stimulus bill is being rushed through Congress, the way this omnibus land bill is being pushed through Congress makes the stimulus bill look like it's absolutely plodding through this process.

The omnibus land bill that will be up sometime this week, supposedly, is over 160 different bills wrapped into one gigantic bill. Seventy-seven of those bills have never been discussed in the House. There has never been a hearing, nor a markup in committee, a vote on the floor, of over half of those particular bills, which means if I was allowed this hour to talk about every one of these bills, I would have to take around 20 seconds apiece to go through everything that is in this particular omnibus land bill.

And one must have to ask very simply, Why do it so quickly? What is the speed? At least in the stimulus bill we can say there is an emergency that we have to do something, but we can't do it here.

So I intend to speak about this omnibus bill and say why there are some problems, even though I fully admit there are some very, very good bills in the omnibus bill. I should know that two of them are mine. And they are very good bills.

Chairman RAHALL of the Resources Committee has some bills in here that we have talk about on the floor and in committee. They are very, very good bills.

□ 1845

But still, 77 of them are bills that the Senate decided to put into this package without the House having any kind of input or hearing into this process.

So I am going to be talking about the problems of this bill and the process of it, the cost of it, as well as the content that happens to fit into this particular pattern.

Now a lot of people here in this House have been former State legislators. That gives us some ability to help as far as understanding the process of what is going on. But it also helps us to