

NOBODY FAVORS HATE CRIMES

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker, yesterday and today in the full Judiciary Committee we have been taking up a bill called, by most people, the hate crimes act. It sounds like something that everybody would be for. You know, who favors hate? Nobody. Perhaps the only kind of hate we should be in favor of is the hatred with which we hate hate. But that's not what it's about. It is about creating new law, new crimes that are duplicates of what's in every State in the Union.

Now, there are 45 States that already have hate crimes bills, but even there, most are unnecessary. The case that you often hear that is a reason we need hate crimes is the James Byrd case, where this poor gentleman, African-American, was dragged to death.

Now, I would be in favor of allowing the victim's family to pick the terrain and the manner of dragging the defendants once they are convicted, but that's not allowed. The death penalty amendment was even voted down.

So there's no enhancements, nothing that would affect the poster cases that are constantly raised as a reason to have the hate crime laws. And, in fact, when we hear over and over there's these epidemics of hate crimes that we have to stop, actually, there were nearly a million assaults in America in 2007; 242 assaults included some kind of bodily injury in which there was some motive attributed to bias or hatred because of a selected group, 242.

Again, there was a killing of a poor young man named Nicholas West, killed because he was a homosexual. His perpetrators were not charged under a hate crimes law, they were charged under a capital murder law for kidnapping. And they have already got the death penalty, just like the worst two perpetrators in James Byrd's situation. So what is this about? Well, perhaps it's about trying to create a special class of protected people who maybe shouldn't have protection.

One of the last amendments we made today was going to—at least in this definition the term “sexual orientation” is included. We kept trying to confine it to things that were not just an aberration, and even the amendment to at least exclude pedophiles from the protected class was voted down on a strict party line.

Every Democrat there voted to protect pedophiles and every Republican voted to exclude them, at least, from the definition of sexual orientation. We were told, well, there is a definition in one of the other laws about sexual orientation, and it confined it to heterosexuality and homosexuality.

It's not in this law. It's not there. There is no reference to another law. So as a former appellate judge I would be left in reviewing the law to say well, what is the plain meaning? You can consider other definitions.

Well, some judge will do the right thing that a judge is supposed to do and say, hmm, sexual orientation, it means what it says. It's however you are oriented sexually. If that's towards child—and the diagnostics statistics manual has about 30 different types of sexual orientation. So that includes voyeurism, it includes the pedophilia, it includes things like exhibitionism. It includes necrophilia for corpses and all these horrible things.

But even under this law, since exhibitionists are not excluded—and I have had women tell me they have had people flash themselves, men flash themselves, and they immediately reacted and hit them with a purse.

Under that scenario, under this law, the exhibitionist committed a misdemeanor and the woman that hit him with her purse committed a new Federal felony under the hate crimes law.

That is absurd. We don't need this law. There is no reason for it. We even tried to include in here specifically the kinds of churches that were invaded and attacked for supporting the California marriage amendment, and that was voted down on a straight party line. There should be no special classes.

And the other thing here that would silence Christian ministers and eventually rabbis or imams from quoting the Bible, the Tanach or Koran where it condemns homosexuality, because under this bill if a minister, a rabbi, imam quotes from those scriptures and says homosexuality is an aberration—or whatever language they use, that it is wrong, it hurts society—and some nut hears them and goes out, commits a crime of violence, then under 18 U.S.C. (2)(a) they could be arrested, charged as a principal.

This was a bad bill, and it was a bad day for the law.

THE PROGRESSIVE MESSAGE

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

Mr. ELLISON. I am here with the Progressive Caucus, that caucus that brings to the people of the United States every week a progressive vision for America.

I am very honored to be joined by our Chair tonight, the only one who continues to fight week in week out every day for peace in our world who has the longest running record of 5-minute speeches for peace, LYNN WOOLSEY.

Let me yield to the gentlelady for a welcome this evening.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Thank you, Mr. ELLISON, for your great leadership on The Progressive Message, which is the message of average, normal American people, and we know it. And we are proud to speak it, because there is nothing like the issues that we stand for with the Progressive Caucus, our progressive promise, that hits home to

the American people like what we are promising to work on.

Tonight, we are going to talk about our Earth, I believe. Thank you for bringing that to us.

But also thank you for recognizing my, I believe, 309 5-minute speeches on the floor regarding Iraq and peace in general, and Afghanistan, now that we are looking like we don't know when we are going to get out of there.

We can talk about saving the Earth, but if we destroy it with war, then we won't have an Earth to save. So thank you for doing this tonight.

Mr. ELLISON. Thank you. Let me just say that you are right. And I do want to commend you, I don't know if anyone has a longer running number of 5-minute speeches on any issue than you do, so I am proud to know that the longest-running series of 5-minute speeches is on the subject of peace, is on the subject of Iraq, and is by a dedicated and progressive leader such as yourself.

Madam Speaker, we want to welcome folks to The Progressive Message and let people know that they can always plug into the Progressive Caucus. The e-mail address is cpc.grijalva.house.gov where people, I hope, will communicate. It's very important that we stay in touch and that this is The Progressive Message.

Tonight, you are right, the subject is clean energy jobs and our Earth. Let's start out with just a few basics.

The progressive energy policy, global climate change and green jobs, has to be made up of a few essential components. The fact is that U.S. energy policy is everyone's business.

U.S. energy policy touches nearly every aspect of American life, our homes, our natural environment and, most importantly, our economy and the Earth itself.

Last year Americans spent \$400 billion buying oil outside of the United States. This is a tremendous expenditure on our economy and sends dollars outside of our economy. And that means that last year American families spent about \$3,000 apiece on fossil fuels that contribute to the disastrous changes in our global climate.

I think it's important to point out that we are here now, we are approaching the first 100 days of the new administration. Haven't been here long, but we have been here strong. There is no doubt that energy policy will be a major component of the next 2 years, and it's critical to point out that the Democratic Caucus and the Progressive Caucus are here to lead the way on this discussion.

I would like to stay positive, but we have to make sure that we have a good record, and the record requires that we revisit some of the things that have been proposed over the last 8 years that have not been so good.

One, the Republican plan has not been a good plan. This plan, people contend, that efforts to curb greenhouse gas emissions are perilous and will

cause undue hardship for Americans in the midst of a recession. The fact is if we don't do something about this global crisis, greenhouse gas emissions, we are all going to be in much more trouble than we are right now.

Right now, in fact, is a good time to deal with the crisis in our economy. It's a chance to rebuild, it's a chance to strengthen, it's a time to invest in infrastructure.

I think, Chairwoman WOOLSEY, it's just a good time to point out that it was during the Civil War that Abraham Lincoln made the decision we are going to have a railroad span the United States. It was during the 1930s, the Depression, that we saw rural electrification be a major commitment of the United States Government under Franklin Delano Roosevelt. It was under Eisenhower, a recession, where we talked about the interstate highway system that we now enjoy today.

In fact, at times like this, it's no time to shrink, no time to be afraid, but it's a time to be bold. Let's not go for any naysayers or fearmongers; let's move forward.

Is this a time to be bold, is this a time to shrink and be afraid, or is it a time to be bold and grab on to a new energy policy?

Ms. WOOLSEY. Well, first of all, Madam Speaker, thank you for being here with us tonight also. We honor you.

You know, as cochair of the congressional Progressive Caucus with RAÚL GRIJALVA, it's really an honor to be here and represent the Progressive Caucus and people of this country and the people of my district.

And we are doing this right now because it's Earth Day—yesterday was Earth Day, I believe, but we couldn't do this yesterday.

So before we get into the question you asked me, Congressman, let's talk about Earth Day and how it happened. I think it's good for people to remember that Earth Day is a day designed to promote awareness and foster appreciation for our environment.

□ 1500

Now, yesterday, yes, that is right, it was yesterday, it was the 29th anniversary of the very first celebration. That celebration was determined, and over the 29 years we have recognized on Earth Day something that we should be recognizing every single day and every minute of our lives, that we have a need for a healthy environment and we have to work to protect it. It won't happen on its own because we are working very hard, it appears, to destroy our environment. So we have a lot of work to do.

So, let's talk about what are the roots of Earth Day itself. Although the specific day was set by former U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin, his motivation came from the horrific oil spill that engulfed Santa Barbara and the California coast in 1969. That was such a horrible experience for all

of us in California. Earth Day is the perfect time, and he knew it, to highlight that event and to work to ensure that oil spills never happened again. Of course, over 29 years there have been other oil spills, but he was so sincere that he put Earth Day together to emphasize no more oil spills.

So many in our country who don't have a strong connection to Santa Barbara oil knew how important it was to California, and they come to our districts and they learn over and over again what a disaster like that will do. And it could happen in their areas too. It could happen on the Great Lakes. It certainly could happen on the Atlantic coast, down in the Gulf of Florida.

So everybody pays attention, particularly to the oceans. But there is more to Earth Day than our oceans. It is our air, it is our water, it is our trees, and Earth Day has become the basis for what we know we must be doing to solve global warming.

But happy birthday Earth Day yesterday.

Mr. ELLISON. I thank the gentlelady for that important recognition. In fact, it is our appreciation and gratitude for this beautiful Earth that we live on that drives our dedication. We are not really here from the Progressive Caucus talking about what we are against. We are talking about what we are for. And we are for a clean Earth, in which everyone can breathe, can drink, can live and enjoy this wonderful planet that we have, and not just human beings, but all creation. I think it is very important that you set us on the right trajectory for that.

I think as we are looking back and remembering this 29th anniversary of Earth Day, it is important to remember that the course of action we have been following has not been one that has been helpful. In fact, it has brought us to a very difficult situation.

We have seen the energy plan over the last 8 years essentially be made up of tax breaks for oil companies. "Drill, drill, drill," remember that one?

Ms. WOOLSEY. I remember that one.

Mr. ELLISON. Yes, you had better believe we heard that one, which resulted in more pollution which taxpayers have to clean up, and no fundamental investment in a green energy economy like the investment we have been talking about, the investment in an Earth Day to commemorate and rededicate our commitment, the investment in our economy over the centuries, as progressive leaders like Lincoln and FDR made those important investments I referred to a moment ago. There has been no investment in a green energy economy, that will lessen our dependence on oil and reduce global climate change, and, perhaps most importantly, create jobs.

You know, Earth Day, Earth Day is a wonderful time to have this conversation about American clean energy jobs, because Earth Day is not simply about fighting pollution. It is also about enhancing our natural world and our ex-

istence in it. It is about development along the lines that are smart and green, clean and renewable. We can do both.

I will say that I do appreciate some of our Republican colleagues, and I respect them all and enjoy them a lot, but I think it is important to point out that their vision was on display on "Sunday Morning Talk" when one of the Republican leaders said that he dismissed as "almost comical" the idea that carbon dioxide is a carcinogen and that it is harmful to our environment. The proof and evidence was that, you know, that carbon dioxide must be safe because humans exhale it and cows deposit it. That is not a definition of whether it is a carcinogen or a harmful substance. Of course, we do have a science gap, and we can do an hour on that.

But I think it is important to point out that we are not only in commemoration of Earth Day talking about fighting pollution; we are talking about enhancing our world, our green planet, the only one we have, by the way. And, again, as you know very well, the gentlelady from California knows, our Chair of the Progressive Caucus, if we acidify our oceans and if we overheat our planet, the planet will still continue to exist. We just won't be able to live on it. So that is very important to point out.

I think the Progressive plan, and I want to hand it back to the gentlelady right now, is to talk about the importance of a progressive vision for energy policy. I would ask the gentlelady from California, do you believe we need a progressive vision for a progressive energy policy?

Ms. WOOLSEY. Well, we need nothing less than a progressive vision. We need to be bold. You asked me that a little bit earlier. And there is no tip-toeing around this.

I have been on the House Science Committee since I was elected in 1992, sworn in in 1993. I am on the Energy Subcommittee. And in my time here we have never had a hearing with scientists that say global warming does not exist, that it is a dream, that it is a myth. Good science has proven where we are today.

Scientists have been so careful, because that is who they are. They have to prove their point before they come out and say science says global warming is something we have to deal with or else, and we have got this much more time and we need to take these kinds of actions.

Mr. ELLISON. If the gentlelady will yield for a question, you have a lot of experience in Congress. You have been here for a little while, right?

Ms. WOOLSEY. This is my ninth term.

Mr. ELLISON. Ninth term, that means 18 years. In all the time you have been here on this committee, have you ever heard any credible scientist say that global warming does not exist

or that human beings are not contributing to global warming? Have you ever heard anything like that?

Ms. WOOLSEY. Never. Never. I have heard Members on the other side of the aisle on the Science Committee saying that global warming is a myth and pooh-poohing it. It is just something that makes no sense to me, because it is real, and if we don't do something about it soon, the effects are going to be irreversible, and we know that.

Now, here in Congress we get elected every 2 years. Well, we are not going to fix this in 2 years, but we had better start fixing it for our grandchildren. I have five grandchildren, the oldest is 9 and the youngest is 2.

I have four children, and three families have children. So one night one of the families and I were having dinner and we were talking about global warming, and my grandson, then I believe he was 8, he might have been 7, just about came across the table. My grandkids call me "Amah," and he said, "Amah," his eyes were this big, "do you know about the polar bears?" And we had a total conversation about what was happening up in Greenland.

Since then I have been to Greenland. I have seen the ice melt. It is not healthy. I have been to the South Pole. I have seen the shift at the South Pole of the science stations, the ones that are built out of ice. They shift every year, and they are shifting at greater speeds. I have seen the penguins that are having a hard time getting from their ice blocks back to land so that they can feed and breed. It is happening, and we cannot deny it. Not just for us, because we are stupid if we don't do it, but for your children and for my grandchildren. Hopefully, their children will have a nice, clean, safe world to live in.

So do we have to be bold? Does it need to be progressive? Yes. And I don't mean progressive that it is our way or no way. I mean progressive in that we are not afraid to do the right thing. We are not afraid to fight. So that we if we have cap-and-trade, we also ensure that we have benefits for the people that are going to be paying for this in the long run, and that we reinvest in alternative energies, that we know that we have an industry, a green industry that must be the new industry for the United States of America. Because if we don't take advantage of the needs, world needs, that it is going to be our science, it is going to be our engineers, it is going to be our technicians that come up with the solutions, if we let the jobs to put all this together go overseas, what a mistake we will be making, because we will buy this stuff, because we are going to make our world cleaner.

Mr. ELLISON. Well, if the gentlelady will yield back, let me say that part of the progressive vision is to implement provisions of a renewable electricity standard which will create over 300,000 jobs, implement an energy efficient resource standard so we can get energy

savings to create over 222,000 new jobs by 2020. By cutting waste, we save money. The renewable electricity standard alone will result in nearly \$100 billion in savings for consumers and businesses by 2030. Efficiency savings, the energy efficiency resource standard will result in nearly \$170 billion in utility bill savings by 2020.

Opponents of that change that Americans are demanding are not going to be the ones who are remembered finally by history. The ones who oppose efficiency and renewable energy, these are the same folks who are in danger of directing U.S. energy policy. They have ignored global climate change, as you and I have talked about. They have ignored acidification of the ocean, overheating of our planet. They have widened tax loopholes for polluting industries and they have made minimal advances in new, clean energy techniques.

Madam Speaker, the will of the American public is being represented in Congress and the White House now, and we need the American people to continue to demand responsible energy policy, climate change policy that creates jobs and cannot be outsourced. As the gentlelady from California, LYNN WOOLSEY, was just talking about, somebody will come up with the great ideas to green our world. Will they be here? Only if we make the proper investments. Only if we become innovative and maintain our position as innovator.

I yield back to the gentlelady.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Well, you know, I have to confess that I have lived a very privileged life as I raised my four kids in a nice home. It wasn't a palace or a mansion or anything, but it was nice. We were always warm and we had windows open and we had a sprinkler system in my yard.

I feel like I have been part of the problem. I know I have. We eat meat, which uses up so much of our good Earth and our air, and we will probably keep doing a lot of that. But as individuals, as humans, we have to change the way we live and we have to be willing to invest. And I believe, and we are not supposed to use the word, but we have to get a little accustomed to some sacrifice. We need to decide whether we need grass or we need landscaping that survives on little or no water. We have to make these decisions ourselves.

And I don't think we should all have to get incentives to do this. I think that the incentives need to go to industry so they will build the big products, so they will build the solar systems, the wind systems. In our district, we have geothermal, and we need to help in all those areas.

So as individuals some sacrifice will come along. Mostly that sacrifice will be changing the way we do things. That is hard. Nobody likes to change. But we change now, or it will be too late.

Mr. ELLISON. Well, I would point out though that the sacrifices that you

are referring to are not always just giving up something. Sometimes these sacrifices involve getting something.

For example, let's just say if you were to get out of that habit of driving three blocks to the grocery store, you might view that as a sacrifice, but you will save money on gas and you will reduce your waistline.

□ 1515

Mr. ELLISON. If you ride a bike to work, and we promote, as Congress, if we promote nonmotorized transportation, this will reduce our obesity, increase our green and renewable program. Some of these things are things that we think of as a sacrifice but really are not.

If we shut off the television, you know, we might talk to each other and get to know each other a little bit better. If we just pull the plugs out when we leave the house, we can get rid of that ghost energy drain that steals energy when we're not even using these appliances.

So these are just changes that you're speaking of that will definitely enhance our quality of life.

But I want to mention that we have a bill called the American Clean Energy and Security Act which does do some very important things. It creates jobs that cannot be shipped overseas. It reduces our dependence on foreign oil, increases production of clean and renewable energy sources, cracks down on heavy polluters, and gives American entrepreneurs and innovators, as you mentioned your role on the Science Committee, what they need to stay competitive in the global economy.

The fact is that this bill, this ACES bill, invests in American jobs, reduces our dependency on foreign oil and does a lot of important things that we need, as Americans. And so I'm thinking that, you know, it's important that citizens, individuals like you and I, do better. But it's also important that the Congress take action. Individual citizens, pull those plugs out, walk, do things, do more walking, riding your bike, doing things like that. But also, we have, as a Congress, a societal responsibility that we cannot just relegate to the individual citizen. In fact, government often will signal better behavior and more green and renewable and Earth-friendly behavior that citizens can partake of.

So I yield back to the gentlelady.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Actually, one of the things, under JIM OBERSTAR's leadership, he is the Chair of the Transportation Authorization Committee, under his tutelage, we have invested a lot in nonmotorized transportation, because it's hard to ask the children to walk to school when their roadways are full of cars and there are no sidewalks. It's hard to ask people to ride bicycles when there are no safe bicycle paths.

Actually, Marin County, in my district, is one of the model programs in his program, and it's certainly proving itself out. You know, California gets a

lot of criticism because we use a lot of energy. But, you know, per capita we use less than any other State in the country, and that's because we actually get conservation and we live conservation. We actually, in most areas, walk our talk in that regard.

Now, the Progressive Caucus is absolutely ready to fully participate in this debate about good ideas so that we can ensure any change in the way we treat carbon will be done to maximize the benefits to the environment, minimize the impact on our constituents, and transform our economy with new energy technologies. Our feet are on the ground. We're ready to go. But what we are going to want is bold decisions and bold resources and bold support so that we aren't tiptoeing along and pretending it isn't happening. We're going to work with the Obama administration. We're going to work with our leadership, and we are going to work with both sides of the aisle to ensure that what we're talking about is real and doable and supported.

Mr. ELLISON. Well, that's very important. And I want to thank you for those observations. The Progressive Caucus needs good ideas, too. We are being fully engaged in this energy debate that's going on. We are not shrinking from this debate at all. And if people want to offer some advice, there is a Web site that we have, and folks can give us their views, cpc.grijalva.gov—GRIJALVA is the name of our other co-chair—because we do want to have people say here's what you should do.

One of the things that it means to be progressive is to be open-minded and try to gather in ideas from all places, to be grassroots, to gather in views and opinions from multiple sources. We don't claim a monopoly on good ideas, but we do have values that we uphold here of a progressive type.

I want to just say, as we prepare to, in the next 5 to 7 minutes, hand it over to our Republican colleagues, that it's important that we do debunk a few myths, though. I mean, I've heard it said that the progressive support of cap-and-trade, isn't that just an energy tax? Well, we believe that it's not.

First off, the Democratic plan is to repower America with clean energy and jobs. As for capping global warming pollution, the Democratic plan is simple. It makes polluters pay, and helps green companies prosper so they can hire more workers. It's time that the American solution we put in place to successfully fight acid rain in 1990, after which time electricity rates fell 10 percent and the U.S. economy added 16 million new jobs. It's important to point out that the acid rain solution had bipartisan support and was signed by the first President Bush.

It's true also—I mean, another attack item. Won't Democrats' energy tax raise electricity rates even though President Obama said cap-and-trade will make energy prices increase?

Saving consumers money is not a tax. Saving business money is not a

tax. Sending \$400 billion a year abroad, now, that is the kind of tax that we do want to avoid and help the American people not have to pay.

The Democratic plan declares energy independence and puts America on a path to economic recovery. President Obama spoke of transitioning to a clean energy economy that will create jobs, make our homes and buildings and vehicles more efficient, and protect consumers. In his inaugural address, he said we will harness the sun and the wind and the soil to fuel our cars and our factories.

We believe that this is the right direction. Although the Progressive Caucus will not simply adopt or parrot any policy, we will put forth a progressive policy and argue for those changes as the energy policy moves forward. We will be part of this conversation, fully participating in it, and ask that members of the public and the progressive community stand up and come forward to be part of this important energy policy.

So, before we wrap up, I just want to offer our co-chair an opportunity to comment on our subject tonight. And after that we'll conclude.

Ms. WOOLSEY. First of all, I want to thank you, Congressman ELLISON, for these really informative Congressional Progressive Caucus dialogues that you have hosted every week ever since we came back into Congress this session.

I want to say something about cap-and-trade, just so that those who are listening to us know how, what we think it means. And you said it. We already have cap-and-trade in this country. Not with carbon, but with "NO_x and SO_x," which is better known as the pollutants that cause acid rain. It's been happening since 1990. And guess what? It works.

So therefore, to explain the cap, it means we set a limit on the amount of carbon that large producers can put into the atmosphere. Then, over time, we reduce that number so people are allowed to produce less and less carbon until we get the reductions we need to avoid devastating climate change.

The trade part means that the government issues credits for carbon emitters under the previously established cap. I know that's complicated, but it'll be easier to understand when it all gets laid out in front of people. These credits can then be bought, sold and traded, which means this operates under a free market system.

Now, frankly, I'm just absolutely confused why so many Republicans are upset about a system that works on the principles of the free market. But I think once all of that is debunked, people will be able to better embrace it, particularly if we have some benefits, cap trade and dividends that come back to individuals and to industry and ensure that the cost of it is a benefit to the people who are paying those costs, because big industry is not going to be the only one that pays for it. I mean, they're benefiting from what they're

producing. We are too, but they are. But it's going to cost everybody more. It just does. That's all there is to it, so they want to see some benefit from it.

And so let's work on this together. Let's make sure that the investment in clean technology helps all people; that utility bills can come down, and other programs will be made in effect so that we are investing in our future, not our past.

Mr. ELLISON. That's an excellent word, Congresswoman WOOLSEY. You again have been a great champion of a progressive message. You have been talking about a progressive promise. You've been talking about a progressive message. You have been lifting up the banner of progressive politics in this Congress, and we all want to thank you for your tremendous leadership, not to mention your 309 consecutive speeches in favor of peace.

Tonight we've been talking about American clean energy and jobs. This is the symbol of a windmill. We can harness the wind and the sun. We can harness the natural world to live in harmony with the planet, not simply use it and exploit it like so much of an endless commodity, but to truly use it in a way that will allow humanity to live in harmony with the natural world and to create jobs and to make our needs met.

We talked about, tonight, the need for individuals to do things; is that right, Congresswoman WOOLSEY? Individuals should step forward. We do need to walk, not necessarily ride. We do need to promote transit. We do need to promote smart growth, livable communities. We need to do all these things. We should try to get a hybrid car, or not even take a car. Just walk or use nonmotorized transportation. We should pull out those plugs that we just leave sitting in the wall all day when we're not even at home.

But it is also on the responsibility of government to take decisive action, to make the investments that we need in those bike paths, to promote a cap-and-trade system that surely reduces our carbon footprint and takes the proceeds from those programs and puts them back into renewable energy and helps ameliorate the cost to low-income individuals of meeting this important task.

We need to do these things. We need to have a bold, committed program which gets the carbon footprint much, much lower so we can live on this planet.

But finally, we need to remember that, in honor of Earth Day, that this Earth is something that we come from, not something that we are here to exploit. Even from a religious standpoint, we are the trustees of this Earth and have a responsibility to take good care of it. And I want to commend all those congregations, Congregations Caring for Creation, other groups like that doing good work, citizens out there doing good work, people concerned about the environmental justice aspects of this question of energy policy,

making sure that low-income communities, communities of color, are in the middle of this fight for this clean renewable world that we're coming into and are participating fully. Not green for some, green for all, right?

And so, with that, we just want to thank everybody. Here's our Web site. We want to know what you think. We care about your opinion. Check back with us next week at the Congressional Progressive Caucus, the progressive message, hear about the progressive promise, and give us your ideas.

□ 1530

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S ENERGY PLAN

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

Mr. WHITFIELD. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Yesterday was Earth Day, and people around this country and around the world celebrated this great planet that we live on, and all of us, whether we're Democrats, Republicans or Independents, are committed to protecting this climate for the well-being of future generations.

I think most of us would also agree that one of the major issues facing the entire world today relates to the strength of the world's economy and the loss of jobs that is taking place around the world. We know that, right here in America, our unemployment rate is up to about 8.6 percent at this time. Last month, it was about 8.1 percent. In my home State of Kentucky, we have some counties with unemployment of about 15 percent; and I understand that in the State of Michigan, where we've had the automobile difficulties, the unemployment rate in that State is around 15 percent. So as we talk about strengthening the economy, the two most important policies relating to that are tax policy, number one, and energy policy, number two.

It has already been pointed out today by many people that the U.S. Congress is in the process of considering a comprehensive energy bill that would bring about dramatic changes in the way America produces energy. Now, when we talk about energy, of course there are two aspects of it.

Number one, we're talking about: How do we fuel our transportation needs? Everyone knows that we do import a lot of foreign oil, because we're consuming about 22 million barrels of oil a day, and we're not producing that much oil in America. Worldwide, we're consuming about 85 million barrels of oil a day. By the way, that's about what the total production of oil is worldwide, around 85 million barrels of oil a day. So that's one aspect of this energy issue.

A second part of it is: How do you produce electricity? That's vitally im-

portant as we find ourselves in America competing with other countries around the world. In America, we happen to be very fortunate in that we have a 250-year supply of coal. It's our most abundant resource. By the way, not only is it our most abundant resource, but it is also the most economical way to produce electricity.

In my home State of Kentucky, for example, 90 percent of all of the electricity produced in Kentucky is produced with coal, and that's why, in Kentucky, we have some of the lowest electrical rates in the world—between 4 and 5 cents per kilowatt hour. In California, Massachusetts and in other States where they don't really favor the use of coal, they're paying in the neighborhood of 14 cents and 15 cents per kilowatt hour. Now, we recognize—and it goes without saying—that coal is a fuel that produces carbon dioxide and other emissions, and we know that climate change is one of the most important issues facing America today.

One of the great things about our democracy is we can sit around, and we can have debates about the issues. I think it's important for the American people to hear those debates because, as we discuss the emissions of carbon dioxide, we oftentimes listen to the United Nations International Climate Change Panel. That is the scientific group that does the most studies and that does projections about global warming. They use complicated models to predict what the future will hold, and they do core drillings in the ice panels of the North and South Poles to determine how the weather has been in the last thousands of years. We know that there are patterns of heating and warming and heating and warming.

One thing that I would like to point out this evening, because we've heard a lot about global warming—and we have had extensive hearings on energy and on global warming and on climate change. One thing that I would point out to you is that everyone says emphatically that the models cannot predict with any accuracy what the temperature is going to be anywhere in the world 100 years from now. Witnesses have also been very clear in their testimony that, when the United Nations International Climate Change Panel issues a press release from the review of their models that they're predicting on particular issues, they formally take the worst case scenario, and that is what's released to the international news media. So when we read stories in the international news media, there seems to be a tendency to scare people about what's going on with global warming. I think it's important that we recognize that.

One of the leading environmentalists, who was called "Mr. Green" at one time in Europe, is a fellow named Bjorn Lomborg. He is a respected scientist, and he wrote a book called "The Skeptical Environmentalist." In that book, he went into great detail about the flaws in the models that are being

used to project future climate change. I point that out because I've heard many times that the scientific evidence is indisputable and that it cannot be contradicted. I would like the American people to know that I've sat in on many hearings on this issue, and I've heard scientists disagree on this issue, but the important thing is we need to debate it. The American people will finally make their decision about it. They make those decisions in elections, and they vote for whomever they want to vote, and they listen to the arguments, and they decide what they think is in their best interest. That's the way it should be, but I want to get back to coal for just a minute.

In this energy bill that's being considered in the U.S. Congress today, one big part of that is called cap-and-trade, and it plays a prominent part also in President Obama's budget because, in his budget, he indicated that he anticipates revenue from cap-and-trade in the amount of about \$657 billion over 10 years from selling permits to entities so that they can emit carbon dioxide.

Now, I think it's also important to remember that when Peter Orszag, the chairman of the Office of Management and Budget in the Obama White House, testified before Congress, he said that that figure may very well be conservative, that it could be twice or maybe three times that amount. So it could be anywhere from \$657 billion to \$1.7 trillion in cost to implement cap-and-trade, and of course, cap-and-trade is designed to have people pay for emitting carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

Now, when people pay that much money to do it, every witness that I've heard—and everyone would almost agree—has said that electricity rates are going to go up, and maybe that's not all bad, because we know that if we're going to have a cleaner environment, we're going to have to pay more.

Just on the cap-and-trade aspect of this which relates specifically to coal, I would like to remind everyone that the European Union initiated a cap-and-trade system 4 or 5 years ago. I may not be exactly right on that. Maybe it was 3 or 4 years ago or 4 or 5 years ago. Last year, they acknowledged that they had more carbon dioxide emissions than they'd had before they implemented cap-and-trade. Now, to be fair, they indicated also when they testified before the Congress that they think that they have fixed that problem and that they feel more confident as they move forward; but this cap-and-trade system is a prominent part in the Obama energy plan that is now before the United States Congress. There's another aspect of it that bothers me.

If you'll recall, I talked about one of the major problems facing all of us today, which is the economy—trying to restore jobs, getting people back to work, getting those stock values back up in their pension plans and retirement plans. In order to do that, America has to be competitive with other