

Mr. McDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, immediately after the President announced his intention to turn America into a 21st century green economy, the special interests began lobbying to keep America addicted to oil.

We were told there's no urgency to change, no threat to the planet from the ongoing and massive releases of carbon into the atmosphere, and that we should pump every drop of oil out of every foreign country regardless of how many wars we need to wage to satisfy our addiction.

Just remember this: The special interests want to keep us addicted to oil because that is in their interests, not ours, not America's best interests.

We have an Administration that recognizes and is responding to the global crisis, and Congress needs to support the President with legislation that will cure America of its addiction to oil and save the planet in the process.

Time indeed is running out, and we have before us the evidence and the legislative proposals to remake America into a clean and energy-independent economy. It's time to act while there's still time to have air to breathe.

ENERGY PUNISHMENT TAX

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, somewhere in the prohibited, cold corridors of the darkened back rooms of this castle, the Capitol, in places unknown, unseen, and unheard of by the public, the new Federal taxcrats are carefully crafting the energy punishment tax.

This \$646 billion tax is aimed at punishing Americans and businesses for using any type of energy. The idea is we should not only feel guilty for using energy, we should pay for our energy sins by being taxed on consumption.

So the taxcrats are going to double the cost of natural gas and home heating oil by taxing the use of it. Use natural gas or home heating oil in your home to keep warm in the winter, you're going to be hit with the keeping warm tax.

Electricity costs are going to increase by 73 percent; so be careful about turning on the AC. It's going to cost you more with the keeping cool tax.

Taxes on gasoline will go up 50 percent. Don't drive your car unless you want to pay the new driving tax.

Americans are taxed enough already. The government should not tax us back to a Stone Age existence with the new absurd energy punishment tax.

And that's just the way it is.

NORWEGIAN CONSTITUTION DAY

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

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Madam Speaker, I rise today to join in the

celebration of Syttende Mai, or Norwegian Constitution Day.

On May 17, 1814, an assembly of Norway's leaders signed a Constitution declaring Norway's independence and establishing a government that was radically democratic for its time, especially in Europe.

This Sunday, exactly 195 years later, millions of Norwegians will gather to celebrate their independence, their long history of constitutional democracy, and their national achievements.

Norwegians and Norwegian Americans across our country will celebrate at smaller, but no less joyful, Constitution Day events. In my home State of Washington, the Norwegian Ambassador to the U.S. will serve as the Grand Marshal of a Constitution Day parade.

The United States and Norway share in the celebration of Constitution Day because we have a strong diplomatic friendship, a robust trading relationship, and a shared history of commitment to democratic principles.

Moreover, the U.S. and Norway are military partners. Today in Afghanistan, as a for instance, Norwegian soldiers are fighting the Taliban and al Qaeda alongside U.S. servicemembers.

So I congratulate Norway on this Constitution Day and look forward to celebrating Syttende Mai with them for years to come.

STIMULUS

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

Mr. PITTS. Madam Speaker, the Associated Press issued an analysis this week that describes what many have known all along: The \$787 billion economic stimulus plan isn't getting to the people who need it most.

For those who knew the Federal Government would not be able to effectively and efficiently distribute the money, this comes as no surprise.

The May 11 story says: "Counties suffering the most from job losses stand to receive the least help from President Barack Obama's plan to spend billions of stimulus dollars on roads and bridges, an Associated Press analysis has found."

The story continues: "The very promise that Obama made, to spend money quickly and create jobs, is locking out many struggling communities needing those jobs. Many struggling communities don't have projects waiting on a shelf. They couldn't afford the millions of dollars for preparation and plans that often is required."

The Democrat spokesman for the House Transportation Committee said, "I think the Administration oversold the transportation aspect of this. It was sold as the heart and soul of the package, and it really just isn't."

That's the understatement of the year.

21ST CENTURY GREEN SCHOOLS

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

Mr. SIRES. Madam Speaker, a healthy learning environment for our children is the gateway to a brighter future. Unfortunately, too many of them attend schools that are crumbling, making it harder for teachers to teach and students to learn. In fact, research has shown better quality schools have higher rates of student achievement.

For this reason I urge my colleagues to pass H.R. 2187, the 21st Century Green High-Performing Public School Facilities Act to modernize, upgrade, and repair school facilities across this country. This legislation creates healthier, safer, and more energy-efficient learning environments for our Nation's children. In addition to improving our schools, this bill will play an important role in protecting our environment and improving our economy through the creation of environmentally sound schools and the creation of thousands of new construction jobs.

Madam Speaker, I represent an urban district where many students would benefit from the modernization of these schools. By passing this bill, these students and others across this country will get the opportunity to learn in a healthier and sounder environment.

THE CAP-AND-TAX PROPOSAL: WRONG MEDICINE FOR AN AILING ECONOMY

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Madam Speaker, a picture is worth a thousand words. And this ran in the Wall Street Journal: "The U.S. recovery: Uncle Sam throwing a lifeline out". And what is it? It is an anvil of a tax. This signifies what is happening on this cap-and-tax proposal.

A 44 percent to a 129 percent increase in electricity costs, gasoline up 61 cents, natural gas up 108 percent.

Don't believe me? Believe Chairman Emeritus JOHN DINGELL, who said, "Nobody in this country realizes that cap-and-trade is a tax, and it's a very big one."

Also, President Obama, who said, "Under my plan of a cap-and-trade system, electricity costs would necessarily skyrocket."

A tax increase is the wrong medicine for an ailing economy.

AMERICAN CLEAN ENERGY AND SECURITY ACT

(Mrs. CHRISTENSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, as the American Clean Energy and

Security Act goes to markup next week, citizens around our country will be looking forward to legislation that not only addresses the crucial issues of energy independence and climate change but also does not greatly increase our costs.

Americans understand that we are at a crucial point with the high and unpredictable costs of energy, global warming, and its direct impact on our health, wellbeing, and national security must be addressed. The people of the insular areas understand this in a more acute way as we have the highest energy costs in the Nation, geographic locations that are susceptible to the ill effects of climate change, and economies that can be easily affected if the goals of energy independence and environmental sustainability are not reached.

As we work to move our country into a new clean energy economy, we look forward to our full inclusion in legislation that will create jobs in our communities, encourage the production of cleaner renewable energy resources, decrease the pollution that has damaged our air and water quality and impacted our health, and produce entrepreneurial opportunities for both large and small businesses.

We look forward to a new direction and a new clean energy and green economy.

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TAKE CARE OF OUR SOLDIERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

(Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, last Monday a tragic event occurred in Iraq when five servicemembers were killed at the Camp Liberty Combat Stress Control Center. It points out the importance that we need to pay attention to with posttraumatic stress disorder, acute stress disorder, and a wide range of other mental illnesses which can occur after prolonged combat or exposure to severe stress.

We need to understand and communicate with our soldiers and their officers that these problems are real and they are treatable and you can get a soldier back in emotional shape. It is not a sign of weakness. It is not a sign of failure on the part of the soldier or the officer, but they need to get help.

Over the centuries in our military, the uniforms have changed, the weapons have changed, the ships have all changed, but the soldier remains the same, brave and strong and true. But Congress must, nonetheless, provide substantial funding to take care of our soldiers and their families and keep them in mental health shape and physical shape and to get them back on their feet strong and ready.

Congress and our Nation must continue to support them. There is hope,

there is treatment, and we need to continue and support our soldiers in that endeavor.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL AMERICORPS WEEK

(Mrs. CAPPAS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAPPAS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize National AmeriCorps Week. Over the last 15 years, nearly half a million AmeriCorps volunteers have served with thousands of nonprofits, public agencies, and faith-based organizations across America. AmeriCorps recruits and trains millions of community volunteers to serve our country's critical needs in education, the environment, public safety, and disaster relief nationwide.

Sixty-five percent of AmeriCorps alumni go on to pursue a career in public service. In my home State of California alone, almost 8,000 people this year will participate in one of more than 7,500 AmeriCorps programs throughout the State. One such program is coordinated by the Santa Barbara County Education Office in my district.

This program provides daily tutoring and reading for over 700 at-risk students. It recruits volunteers for additional educational programs, and it works to increase disaster preparedness in the schools of Santa Barbara County.

The over 700 million hours served by AmeriCorps members have bettered our communities and touched the lives of countless Americans. These individuals dedicate their time and energy to help meet the needs of our local communities, and during these tough economic times, we need them now more than ever.

To all these incredible participants in AmeriCorps, I commend you and thank you for your service.

NOT RELEASING DETAINEE PHOTOS IS THE RIGHT DECISION

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to say thank you to our President. I am grateful that he has reversed his decision on releasing the alleged detainee abuse images.

It was the right decision to come to. It was the right decision to make, and I congratulate him. I thank him. I think we are all grateful to him.

I am glad to see that he listened to his team of national security advisers and realized that releasing those images is not in our national interest.

It does not make this Nation more safe. It makes it less safe. It does not help our troops in the field. It makes their job more difficult, more dan-

gerous, and it makes their lives less safe every day.

Having Fort Campbell in my district, with troops just returning, having our Tennessee National Guardsmen just now deploying to Afghanistan, what we need to do every day is say thank to you these men and women and make certain that our service honors their service. And I thank the President for joining us in reversing his decision.

PAY MORE ATTENTION TO FRAYING ECONOMY

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, today we have a \$96.7 billion bill that expands supplemental funds for more war in Iraq, ratchets up U.S. military presence in Afghanistan, and allocates a minimum of \$400 million for nation building in Pakistan where corruption is the norm.

We must ask how competent is our government to transform a world beyond our borders that speaks Arabic, Pashtun, and Farsi? Not even a handful of our military does.

Those majorities practice religions largely foreign to us, and their governments, if you can call them that, are undemocratic, weak nation states with vast legions of poor people and corrupt governance. Pakistan alone has 163 million impoverished people, and Afghanistan's largest export is heroin. So we are going to inject ourselves into that situation even deeper, with almost no multinational support.

What have we achieved politically in Iraq? Spending our Nation into endless debt, we have transformed a secular dictatorship into a divided Nation separating Sunni, Shia, and Kurd factions. A nation of 25 million has been upended, millions uprooted, and maybe 18 million shell-shocked people remain, while oil contracts have been divided up among multinationals. Not a pretty picture. And not a situation that will hold long term.

So, now we're going to take on Afghanistan, a country that's not a nation, with over 400 tribes, where the Taliban is strengthened by the very sight of foreign troop presence.

Madam Speaker, it is time for America to come to our senses. After \$1 trillion, isn't it time to pay more attention to the fraying economy here in our homeland and the American people?

PRESSING NEED FOR TAX SIMPLIFICATION

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

Mr. BUCHANAN. Madam Speaker, last week the House Small Business Subcommittee on Finance and Tax held a hearing on a long overdue issue: the pressing need for tax simplification for America's small business.