

case. The administration has recklessly used the taxpayers' money to basically put the administration in charge of General Motors, Chrysler, AIG, Citibank, and the list goes on and on and on.

I don't think the change the American people were looking for when we heard that change was coming was the change where the government took over the micro-management of industry. I really don't believe that was the change Americans were looking for, and yet that's the change we got.

Even worse, when these people who see where the government is going, where the Democrats are taking this country, they say, We'll give our money back. We don't need your bailout money. We want to give it back to you. And they are having trouble trying to give it back. The Obama administration won't take it.

So with all this accumulated debt and with all this spending that we have done, between now and probably the end of July, we are going to take up basically a government health care plan which is going to include another \$1 trillion in entitlement health care spending at a time when all experts agree that Medicare, as we have it right now, has real problems and is going to eventually go broke because there are a whole lot more people taking out of the program than are paying into the program and it only gets worse as the baby boomers grow. So we are going to add to that \$1 trillion and, don't worry, we'll figure it out. And, of course, we just heard about the energy tax that's coming our way.

You know the real money that we ought to be worrying about? It's not these folks we are bailing out. Who we ought to be worried about are those guys who have lost their jobs. That's the money we ought to be worried about, and that's what the folks back home are worried about.

THE PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS MESSAGE: ENERGY

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. Mr. Speaker, this is the Progressive Message. The Progressive Message is the Progressive Caucus' effort to come before the American people at least once a week for 60 minutes or so to talk about a progressive vision for America. Not a vision based on fear, not a vision based on a denial of science, not a vision based on division, not a vision based on scapegoating some minority group. But instead a vision that is inclusive, that says we all matter and we all count. A vision that says science is something we should rely on and have some faith in and some real confidence in because we understand that whether you come from a faith tradition or whether you

don't, we have minds that we should use and it's human nature to discover and inquire and find out the facts.

A vision that says that, yes, we are entrusted with this Earth and we, as human beings, are responsible for it and that where we have gone astray, we should try to correct the situation for the sake of our children and all life on the planet.

A progressive vision where we come together every week and talk about things like civil rights, equal opportunity in the economy; where we talk about the struggle to end global warming, or at least try to slow it down; where we come and talk about progressive issues like peace, like demilitarizing our society, like promoting dialogue, diplomacy, and development, by trying to resolve war through dialogue and not through conflict and fighting. These are the themes that we come together with the Progressive Message every week.

This is the Progressive Caucus that brings this message. And we have a Web site, cpc.grijalva.house.gov. It's very important to stay in touch with this critical Web site because it is this Web site that we rely on to communicate with the community around the country.

Tonight with the Progressive Message, we are going to come and talk about our Nation's energy future. America has to embrace this idea that carbon emissions must be cut and must be cut drastically. It won't due just to act like there's no such thing as global warming and deny the science that proves that not only does it exist but it's caused by human behavior. We are here tonight to say it doesn't make sense to say that, look, we can't do anything about global warming because it might in some way hurt our reliance on coal because some people make a lot of money selling coal.

If coal and the use of coal is out of step with the needs of our environment, then we have to find alternative sources of energy in order to make it. If nuclear energy cannot be safely used and there's no way to store it, we should look for other ways and incentivize other ways in order to make energy.

The fact is by whipping out fear, hysteria around cap-and-trade and coming up with clever slogans, which I am not even going to repeat or dignify, the fact is that we are simply delaying the inevitable, which is the gradual acidification of our oceans; the acceleration of melting of our Arctic ice caps; of expansion of desert; of loss of species, of animals, and plants; of intensification of hurricanes and all these very serious problems. The scientists all agree. Only people who don't want to listen to science don't agree, and, yes, we have some of them here.

The fact is addressing carbon emissions, addressing global warming, is not going to hurt our economy. It's going to actually bring jobs. It's not going to hurt our farm economy. And

it's certainly not going to be the devastating thing that some people on the other side of the aisle claim that it is. The fact is tonight I just want to talk to people who know that global warming and the acidification of our oceans is a very dangerous and serious problem for all the world and want to do something about it for a change, want to do something serious about it and are not willing to just let this Earth continue to heat up and the oceans continue to acidify and the species continue to die out and the ice in the northern and southern regions of our world continue to melt.

People who want to do something about it, we have a bill that's been marked up and it has been reported out of the Energy and Commerce Committee. We need to hear from you on this bill.

The fact is that right now we have been in Congress focusing on the health care bill. We have been focusing on marking up other important pieces of legislation. And I personally am not confident that we are focused enough on this energy bill. We're not focused enough on the cap-and-trade bill that's coming out. So we want to encourage people to respond and offer their views.

And I want to say this: those of you who yearn for change, who know that carbon emissions are killing our planet, I hope that you understand that your engagement in this process is very important. We need people to give us the feedback we need because there has been a bill reported out. It's not the law yet. It hasn't even been brought to the floor yet. But it is being shaped and crafted every day. And without the active engagement of good ideas coming forth, we will not get the bill that we need.

I want to give a lot of credit to the Members of Congress who have worked hard on the bill. Congressman WAXMAN and Congressman MARKEY have been doing a good job. But I dare say that the legislative process is engaged, involved, and that everybody has to have a say-so in this thing. And those two leaders in the area of carbon emissions have not denied that. In fact, they have welcomed it.

I just want to give a background on the bill that exists so far. It's called the American Clean Energy and Security Act, and it's referred to ACES. And this bill was reported out of the Energy and Commerce Committee on May 21, 2009, and it passed by a vote of 33 to 25. That's not a big margin. The legislation will create millions of new clean energy jobs, in my opinion and based on the facts, and it will enhance America's energy independence and protect the environment.

Another thing that the bill will do is it will signal to the world community that America is serious about cutting carbon emissions. America is leading the way in the world to cut carbon emissions. And, therefore, countries like India and China and other nations of the world that are big emitters, and

we're the number one emitter, but there are others that emit a lot of carbon as well, they now have to bring their economy in line with the needs of our planet.

□ 1800

This bill does represent a new beginning for America's energy environmental future. By saying so, I don't mean to imply that it's a perfect bill or that it can't stand improvement—I'm asking you to help improve it right now—but it does represent a real stark departure from the past.

The bill requires electric utilities to meet 20 percent of their electricity demand through renewable energy sources and energy efficiency by the year 2020. It reduces carbon emissions from major U.S. sources by 17 percent by 2020. It reduces carbon emissions by 80 percent by 2050 compared to 2005 levels. Complementary measures in the legislation, such as investments and preventing tropical deforestation, will achieve a significant additional reduction in carbon emissions.

The bill invests in new clean-energy technologies and in energy efficiency, including energy efficiency and renewable energy that is to the tune of \$90 billion in new investments by 2025. It invests \$20 billion in electric and other advanced technology vehicles. It invests \$20 billion in basic scientific research and development, and it protects consumers from high energy prices. According to estimates of the Environmental Protection Agency, the reductions in carbon pollution required by the legislation will cost American families less than the cost of a postal stamp per day.

The fact is I don't come before you today to say that this bill is wrapped up in a bow. I come to you, asking you to engage in the process that is going on in Congress right now, to be part of this debate, to be part of this dialogue, and to offer your views so that we can come up with the best product available.

I also come to you to say do not let the perfect be the enemy of the good. If we have a good bill here—and it is pretty good—even though it's not perfect, we want your support, and we want your ideas, but it's time to engage and to focus on this energy bill. It's coming. It's marked up in committee. It's in the Ag Committee now, and it's going to need American participation and input.

I want to let our fellow Americans know, who are committed to cleaning up our environment and to decreasing our dependence on harmful fossil fuels, that the Progressive Caucus is proud of the progress that the legislation has made so far. We don't believe that it's done—it's not close—but we're proud of the progress that has been made. We want everyone to know it's not finished and that your input is needed. There is much work to be done.

While we consider this particular legislation as a good start and as a founda-

tion to build on, we are continuing to push for greater expansion in the creation of clean, renewable energy sources like wind and solar. We are continuing to push for the increased regulation of industries that pollute at taxpayer expense, and we are continuing to put America back to work by creating green-collar jobs that cannot be outsourced.

The general Progressive principles for energy legislation are going to be that we need a sharp departure from the past, that we need to move quickly to secure greater progress, that we need to protect individuals as well as communities, and it has got to be based on science and not on politics.

Now, I just want to say again that these are some of the basic ideas of what the bill will do. I'm going to talk about some of the mechanics of the bill in a moment, but I want to make it clear that the fact is that what we have had in the past simply will not work. We've got to have that change. In order to have that change, we've got to have a lot of public input, and this is the time to offer it.

I just want to take a few questions as we move on because a lot of people have responded to my plea that we should have a fully blown, strong conversation around America so that people can offer their views on this critically important topic. There was a question asked at Progressivecongress.org, and 4,887 people asked this question:

Why is EPA oversight of the coal industry being gutted?

Well, let me say that the reason those provisions regarding the EPA oversight of the coal industry are not strong enough is simply because we haven't heard from you enough. We need input on this point. We need you to talk about how you feel about this. We need oversight on everything, but we need your input on what we should be doing to have oversight on coal, and we need your input on how this bill needs to be changed to make sure that the coal industry is being properly monitored. This is a critical thing for you to talk about—I know—and I can tell you that coal-fired power plants are, in my view, a serious problem.

I think it's a basic minimum that they have the technology necessary to clean them up as much as possible. The fact is, even with the best technology we have so far, we still have coal releasing particulate matter into the air—lead, barium, cadmium, mercury emissions, and serious things like that—and into our water that make our fish polluted and inedible.

We've got to have oversight on coal, and I am here tonight to ask you to get engaged in this debate, to get involved in this conversation and to put your ideas up here. Why is the EPA oversight of the coal industry being gutted? You know what? It's because we're not engaging in this debate and are not shaping this debate. It's because we're not calling our Members of Congress

and telling them what we want. So I ask you to do that. It's very important that we engage in this conversation. It's ongoing now.

I'll get to more questions in a moment, but let me just speak a little bit about what some of the key provisions of the bill will be. We've talked about one of the provisions that people are concerned about.

Key provisions of the bill include requiring electric utilities to meet 20 percent of their electricity demand through renewable energy sources and energy efficiency by 2020. Now, that is one of the provisions of the bill, and I thought I would make that point before I got to the next question, and 1,871 people asked this question:

Why is Congress refusing to support Obama in his call to get 25 percent of our electricity from renewables?

The bill marked up so far is 5 percent lower on the renewable energy standard than we need. I think 25 percent is a better number, and I hope that we get it, but without political force behind it, we won't. So call up your Congressman, and let him know how you feel about a 25 percent renewable energy standard.

I'll tell you this: Based on the history that we've had so far, I'm happy with the 20 percent renewable energy standard. A 20 percent renewable energy standard is better than the status quo, but it's still not good enough, and it's not as good as we can do. So I think it's very important that we hear from everybody about the importance of a 25 percent renewable energy standard. It's very important that we hear from people about why that 5 percent higher and more ambitious standard would be better than the 20 percent. I think it's obvious why it would be better than the 20 percent. It's 5 percent higher. Yet what does it give us? What does it bring us? What kind of assets and benefits do we get by pushing for that higher renewable energy standard?

At the end of the day, we need to hear from everybody on this point, and we need to hear from you. If we don't hear from you, we're all going to be poorer for it.

Another key provision of the bill is that it invests in new, clean-energy technologies in energy efficiency, including energy efficiency in renewable energy, carbon capture sequestration, electric, other advanced technology vehicles, and in basic scientific research. In this category of investment, we're talking about a significant investment. We're talking about over \$190 million. This is a lot of money. The fact is, because the proceeds will be from the cap-and-trade system, this bill is PAYGO neutral. It's very important to bear that in mind as well. The bill will mandate new energy-saving standards for buildings, appliances and industry.

Addressing this issue of buildings is very important. A lot of people know, and more people need to know, that a tremendous amount of energy is lost

through the roofs of our buildings. We need stronger building standards, and we need more energy-saving technology and incentives to get us there with this legislation. If you believe they're not sufficient, we need to hear from you right now. There was a question asked:

Are initiatives for future government buildings to be built green? If not, why not?

The answer is we do have initiatives for future government buildings to be built green. We also have other bills separate from this bill in Congress to incentivize the building of green homes, particularly in HUD homes. There is a bill winding its way through Congress now, and the author of that is ED PERLMUTTER from Colorado. I'm an author on that bill, and I'm happy to be. So that bill, called the GREEN Act, is a very good bill.

Another important part of the bill is to reduce carbon emissions from major U.S. sources by 17 percent by 2020 and by over 80 percent by 2050 compared to 2005 levels. Complementary measures in this legislation, such as investments in preventing tropical deforestation, will achieve significant additional reductions.

Now, again, this is another important piece of the puzzle. The United States needs to do its part. I hear many friends—well, people from the other side of the aisle—always say: Well, what about China and India? What about Europe? What about other places? The fact is, if America sets a marker down there that we are going to cut our carbon emissions, that sends a powerful signal; it enhances our ability to talk to our neighbors around the world and say they've got to cut theirs, too.

So I am very proud that America is leading and is trying to be out there in front and is doing the right thing and is not simply saying, We're not going to change our carbon emissions until other countries change theirs. To me, that's not the American attitude. The United States needs to take responsibility and help lead the way. So it's very important, and I'm very happy that the United States is taking its own responsibility to reduce carbon emissions by U.S. sources by 17 percent.

Let me talk about the renewable energy standard in the bill. The American Clean Energy and Security Act, ACES, as I said before, requires retail electric suppliers to meet a growing percentage of their load with electricity generated from renewable sources. The combined renewable electricity and electricity savings requirement begins at 6 percent in 2012. That's coming up. It gradually rises to 20 percent in 2020. At least three-quarters, 75 percent, of the requirement must be met by renewable energy except that, upon receiving a petition from the Governor, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission can reduce the renewable requirement to three-fifths, or 60 per-

cent. In 2020, 15 percent of the electricity load in each State must be met with renewable electricity and 5 percent with electricity savings. Upon receiving a petition from the Governor, the renewable requirement can be reduced to 12 percent, and the electricity savings can be increased to 8 percent.

It is important to keep this in mind. This is sort of an essential part of this bill, the renewable energy standard that we've set forth. Can it be better? Yes, I think it can, but we need to hear from you to make it better. As I said, this bill is being marked up and is going through committee as we speak, and it will likely be on the floor before you know it, so please don't miss your opportunity to be a part of this conversation. It can't just be a Beltway conversation. It has to be a conversation that engages Americans from Minnesota—my own State—from California, Oklahoma, Texas, and from all over. We've got to hear from America. We've got to hear from America's progressive community on these issues.

Let me also talk about the importance of this bill. We talked about the investments in clean energy, and we talked about the money allocated for that. I did not mention yet that this bill will promote the deployment of smart-grid technology, and it will enhance transmission planning. This is an important part of the bill. This smart-grid technology and the promotion of the use of it will help cut carbon emissions. It will help in having a more reliable grid, and it will improve our energy usage, which is an important part of our bill.

I mentioned energy-efficiency measures, which include building standards. As to one of the questions we already had, which was regarding our initiatives for future government buildings to be built green, and if not, why not, the ACES bill establishes new standards for building efficiency, requiring new buildings to be 30 percent more efficient by 2012 and 50 percent more efficient by 2016. States are offered allowances that they can sell to support the adoption and enforcement of the new standards. The Department of Energy must enforce standards in States that do not incorporate building standards into their State building codes.

Also, we have appliance standards. ACES mandates new efficiency standards in lighting products, in commercial furnaces and in other appliances. We have vehicle standards. The ACES discussion draft has included provisions to harmonize Federal fuel economy standards with EPA carbon emission standards and California standards for light-duty vehicles. These provisions were dropped in the reported bill after the administration reached an agreement on light-duty fuel economy standards with automakers in California.

□ 1815

That's not all. There are other fuel-efficiency standards. We not only have

to reduce emissions—and this bill tries to do that. Does it do it enough? Probably not. But guess what? We need your input and your advice.

The bill also has three primary programs for reducing dangerous carbon emissions that cause global warming: One, a cap on large domestic sources; two, a program to reduce tropical deforestation; and three, an offset program.

Let me talk a little bit about the carbon-capping emissions from large sources.

Starting in 2012, ACES establishes an annual tonnage limit on emissions of carbon and other global warming pollutants from large U.S. sources like electric, utilities, and oil refineries. Under these limits, carbon pollution from large sources must be reduced by 17 percent below 2005 levels by 2020; 83 percent below 2005 levels by 2050. This is an aggressive carbon-capping program, and I am proud that we've come this far. I think we can do better, but this is, I think, progress. If it's not enough progress, I think we need to hear from you.

So these are just a few of the features of the bill. The bill is being marked up. You can see it online. And we hope that people will continue to offer their views on what we should do.

Let me go to another question. So 3,455 people asked this question on progressivecongress.org, that's 3,455 on progressivecongress.org. What is being done to decrease our dependence on oil, such as wind, solar, and other clean energies?

Well, that's what the bill is supposed to do: decrease our dependence on oil and allow us to generate energy from wind, solar, and other clean energies. That's really the point of the bill, through the renewable energy standard, by capping carbon forces, by promoting efficiency and also conservation. That's what we're actually trying to do here.

The fact is there are a number of critics of the existing bill, and I want to address a few of them before I go on to some more questions.

One of the critiques we've heard, particularly from other folks on the other side of the aisle, is that a cap-and-trade bill is an energy tax. First, the plan is to repower America with clean energy jobs and efficient savings, not just drop a tax. As for capping global warming pollution, this plan is simple. It helps polluters pay and helps clean companies prosper so they can hire more workers.

When the folks on the other side of the aisle say that this bill will be a job killer, my only question to them is, Don't you believe in the ingenuity of the American people? You know, they said when we had auto efficiency standards that it would somehow kill jobs. Well, it didn't. They said that when we began to stop acid rain and use cap-and-trade for that purpose, that that would cause job losses. It didn't. The fact is is that innovation and ingenuity—when brainpower will solve this

problem—and I think we should have a little faith in Americans to solve this problem.

And as I said a moment ago, it's the same solution we put successfully with acid rain in 1990 after which time electricity rates fell 10 percent and the U.S. economy added 16 million new jobs.

They're thinking inside the box and don't understand that we've got people who are thinking of new boxes to make. It's important to point out that the acid rain solution had bipartisan support and was signed by the first President Bush. Well, those days of bipartisanship I guess we would like to see come back a little bit more.

Another attack on the bill is won't this "energy tax" raise electricity rates. Even Obama said cap-and-trade will make energy prices "skyrocket."

Saving consumers money is not a tax. Saving businesses money is not a tax. Sending \$400 billion dollars a year to other countries is a tax, and the fact is, it's a tax that Americans are tired of paying.

This plan, this ACES bill, even in its unfinished form, declares energy independence and puts America on the path to middle class recovery. The President spoke of transitioning to a clean-energy economy that will create jobs, make homes, buildings and vehicles more efficient, and protect consumers. In his inaugural address, remember he said we will harness the sun and the winds and the soil to fuel our cars and our factories, and I'm glad he's doing that.

Let me offer just a few numbers in terms of jobs. Clean-energy job provisions, the RES, or Renewable Electricity Standard, will create over 300,000 new jobs. The efficiency saving measures, which is the Energy Efficiency Resource Standard, will create over 222,000 jobs by the year 2020. Cutting waste, saving money. The Clean Energy Jobs provisions, RES standard alone, will result in nearly a hundred billion dollars in savings for consumers and businesses, which we can put in other things, which we can invest in other ways. And the efficiency measures alone will result in \$170 billion in utility savings by 2020.

It's very important to understand that the fear and the scare tactics—people who don't want to take us into the future are always going to try to say what's going to cost money, this is going to go wrong, that's going to go wrong. That's the very essence of a conservative position. They don't want to try anything new. They would rather stay in the status quo than go forward into a better future. But the Progressive vision for our country is not that. The Progressive vision is to deal head-on with this problem, face the problems head-on and create a better situation for all Americans.

Let me just say that this bill, which has been criticized by folks on the other side of the aisle, really is, in many ways, a bill that, of course, is de-

signed to scare some people, because the only solutions we've seen while the House was controlled by Republicans is tax breaks for oil companies who posted record profits, massive increases in greenhouse gas emissions, and erratic spikes in gas and energy prices.

We know that gas prices have been going up over the last several months, but don't you remember only a short while ago they were astronomical last summer, 4 bucks, stuff like that? Well, they're creeping up.

If we go green and really address the greenhouse gas emissions, what will happen is we will see a flattening of these kind of spikes in our energy prices. We will derive savings, and we will have alternative forms of energy and greater control over oil prices.

Marginal increases in renewable energy development. While the rest of the world engages and passes us on, we haven't seen real increases in renewable energy development, just tiny little incremental ones, and a greater dependence on foreign oil.

The fact is is that since 1973, America's dependence upon oil from outside of America has skyrocketed, has absolutely skyrocketed. And this period, much of which was between 1994 right on up to 2006, the House was controlled by Republicans, and for much of that time they had the House, the Senate, and the Presidency and did nothing about this problem; it just got worse. Now we are going to do something about it.

So tonight, we've spent some time talking about energy. The message tonight is twofold. One is that the American Clean Energy Security Act is being developed now. It's a sharp break from the past. It's better than what we have now. It improves the status quo. But Progressive voices have never been satisfied with just doing marginally better. Progressive voices have always said we've got to do way better, we've got to do as well as we can do, not just as well as what we might be able to scrape by with. So I invite people who have a vision for a clean energy future to step forward with their proposals.

The other point is that is not just limited to the bill. It's focused on the idea that this is an opportunity for basic civic engagement and real Democratic participation in our society. As we are now having multiple debates not only on health care but also on foreign assistance reforms, the State Department—as we're talking about appropriation bills, which are probably going to keep us really busy over the next 3 days, the fact is we will be addressing this ACES bill as well, and we cannot allow the advocates for a clean energy, green energy future to not be a part of this critical conversation.

So let me just go through a few more questions, and then we'll begin to wrap up for tonight. It's Thursday night and we're going to move on out, but let me just make sure that everybody who wrote in and addressed our Web site, as we asked them to do, gets their question answered.

What can we do to make it easier for homeowners to become self-sufficient with wind or solar power? We could support the provisions that are in the ACES bill, which address heavy polluters, give American entrepreneurs and innovators the tools they need to stay competitive, which increase production of cleaner renewable energy sources, which reduces our dependence on fossil fuels and creates millions of new jobs. And we can follow the new building standards and we can follow the new vehicle standards.

Why can't we create better tax incentives for business and consumers to use alternative energy? Well, 4,118 people asked this question, and I quite agree. We need to take a close look at the incentives for businesses and consumers to use alternative energy, and I think that we can do better than we're doing right now. And I invite you to engage in that conversation. Essentially, the answer is the politics of the situation have landed us where we are now, and if you want better, you have got to get involved in the debate.

Hawaii is looking for 100 percent clean energy in 10 years. Can every State be urged to push the limits? That question was asked by 728 people on progressivecongress. The fact is the States, much power in the States, great incentives in the States. Each State, all 50 of them, can get out there and set tough, renewable energy standards so that each State can do well. And let me tell you, a State can be a laboratory for the Nation. If States get out there and show that it can be done, that we really can have 100 percent clean energy in 10 years—like they will try to do in Hawaii—and say, Look, we did it. You can do it. Here's how we did it. We can make it happen.

So hats off to Hawaii for their ambitious goal. If you live in a State where you think renewable energy standards like this can be reached, we urge you to get out there and try to make it happen.

Why are we expanding highways when rail transportation would provide greener alternatives to commuters? I quite agree, and 2,799 people asked this question on progressivecongress. We appreciate you putting that question in.

As a person who's really into light-rail transit, bike paths—we're having this debate right now as we're talking about the transportation reauthorization bill. This is a bill that's only reauthorized every 6 years, and I think people should have community forums on this bill all over America. It's not just the ACES bill that can help us get into a greener future, but also the transportation bill and other bills that are coming up can help us get there.

This question, Why are we expanding highways when rail transportation will provide greener alternatives to the commuters? Great question. I agree that this is what we should be doing. I think that highways have been

incentivized and given unfair advantage over rail transit, and I would like to see them compete on equal footing.

So let me say, don't be afraid of the future. The future is coming anyway. Those who stand up and say, Well, we can't have a bill that's going to help America get off fossil fuels and cut greenhouse gas emissions because it's nothing but a tax, understand that the folks who told you about tax-and-spend liberals and all of that—look, we've only had a President and a Democratic Congress for a few months. This stuff wasn't inherited. You want to talk about spenders and debt accumulators? Those guys sit on the other side of this Chamber.

□ 1830

The fact is, the progressive future this country needs is in the hands of the people who are going to help America get into a green, clean future.

This bill, this ACES bill that is being marked up right now, that has already gone through Energy and Commerce, that is in the Agriculture Committee now. This bill is undone and needs the input of all America, people who have a progressive vision for America, people who aren't afraid of the future, not people who cling to the status quo and what happened yesterday, but people who want something better for tomorrow and are willing and have the courage to try to get it.

That's the Progressive Message for tonight. I want to thank everybody for tuning in.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back.

HEALTHCARE REFORM

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

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, tonight, what we would like to talk about is a new and positive medical reform agenda as Congress prepares to debate health care in the United States.

I want to focus this discussion on what we should be for—a bipartisan and centrist agenda for the United States—and compare our country to plans in other countries to make sure that we take the best of all medical care around the world but don't replicate some of the problems that we see both here and abroad.

When we look at a comprehensive reform agenda that would receive widespread support both in the House of Representatives and the Senate, we basically unify around eight major themes.

First, we want to make sure that we guarantee that medical decisions are kept in the hands of patients and their doctors and not a new government bureaucracy.

Second, we want to lower the cost of insurance to make sure that the competitive advantage that the United

States could enjoy would be realized, and that also individual costs for all American families are lowered.

We want to increase the number of Americans who have health insurance to make sure that more and more families have the peace of mind that they need to protect their family incomes, their health, and most importantly, their lives.

We want to allow Americans to keep the insurance they like because we know that over 80 percent of Americans—and especially voters—report that they are either satisfied or extremely satisfied with the health insurance plan they have.

And we want to make sure that we replicate the doctor's principle, that first we should do no harm. And in the Congress, on health care policy, we should follow that advice.

Fifth, we would like to improve quality and accountability and make sure that especially the cost of defensive medicine is reduced and that we know exactly what we are doing with regard to health care outcomes to make sure that we are maximizing the treatment and cures provided when a patient presents in a health care facility.

We want to increase personal responsibility, especially for many of the decisions Americans are making because we know that if they lose weight, quit smoking, and stop drinking, their health care will improve dramatically.

And, finally, we want to lower demand for more Federal borrowing at a time when the United States is already reporting that it will borrow \$1.8 trillion this year. It is difficult to argue that we should turn every family's health care over to the Federal Government, an institution which is already, as the President says, "out of money."

When we look at health care across the world, we see that the percentage of patients who wait more than 2 months to see a specialist is not a dramatic issue in the United States, but this is front-page news in both Canada and the United Kingdom. According to the Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey of Sicker Adults, they report that about 10 percent of Americans wait more than 2 months to see a specialist, but one-third of Britons do, and approaching half of Canadians wait a long time for health care.

We know that health care delayed is health care denied. And imagine—especially if the specialist that you need is an oncologist, someone who treats cancer—what a 42-week wait would be as compared to what we see in the United States.

Secondly, we know from asking Americans, What is the most important thing you would like to see in health care?, they say lowering the cost of their health insurance. Many in this body also say the number one priority is to expand health care coverage so that Americans who do not have health insurance can get it. I would say those two goals are very important, but the most important goal of health

care is to determine whether you live or die, to make sure that, especially if you are facing health care challenges of the most severe degree, you have the greatest chance for you or a member of your family to survive. This is most clear in the case of cancer.

When you or I or a member of our family gets that terrible diagnosis from a doctor that you will be fighting cancer, the question is often asked, How much time do I have? Will I be able to survive? When we look at *The Lancet*, Britain's number one medical journal, they did a ground-breaking study of cancer survival rates across Europe, Canada, and the United States and found that you are more likely to survive in the United States than you are in especially European countries.

They looked at a number of different cancers. For example, prostate cancer: a 78 percent survival rate in Europe—which is fairly good—but a 99 percent survival rate if found in the United States. Bladder cancer: only 66 percent of Europeans survive bladder cancer, 81 percent of Americans. Breast cancer: 79 percent of Europeans will survive breast cancer, but 90 percent of Americans. And uterine cancer: 78 percent of Europeans will survive, but 82 percent of Americans.

Why is it that Americans are doing so much better against cancer than Europeans? Part of it is because in Canada and Europe advanced oncology medicines to fight cancer are restricted; and especially imagery to find cancer, either through x rays, MRIs or CAT scans, are much more available in the United States to find cancer, especially at its earlier stage, which means that Americans, bottom line, have a greater chance of surviving cancer than Europeans.

When we look at 5-year survival rates, overall the picture is also stark. Women fighting cancer have a 63 percent chance of surviving if they are treated in the United States. That survival rate drops to just 56 percent in Europe. For men, the difference is even starker. Sixty-six percent of American men will survive a cancer diagnosis, only 47 percent of European men.

Bottom line, once again we see, across both men and women, you are much more likely to survive cancer in the United States than in European countries. And much of the reason why is because in countries in which the government controls more of the health care sector, they restrict access to oncology medicine and to imagery. That means that cancer is found later and is fought with less aggressive drugs, meaning that Europeans will die at a higher rate than Americans.

When we look at high-tech medical procedures in Britain, Canada, and the United States, many people would say that health care costs are derived by too much access to high-tech medical care. But what we see here is that survival rates are higher in the United States, meaning high-tech is good. And