

North Carolina, all so that we can preserve a mussel, all so that we can preserve and route around wetlands. You can go anywhere in North Carolina and it is pretty much considered a wetland except your developed areas that are already in progress.

I'm not against the highway, the loop being finished, but certainly there are other options that could be looked at. You can see there is an orange line, a blue line, a pink line. They're all there. They all connect, and these are all viable options.

Some of the other organizations that are involved in this, like the North Carolina Turnpike Authority, have already dropped three other options from consideration because of public protests in those towns about potential harm to the communities. Garner stands to lose a projected worth of \$9 million in investments and hundreds of jobs. Investors are literally walking away while the town stands in limbo because of this potential project that is going to take place here.

We cannot continue this. This is what is happening. We must stand for the people of Garner, North Carolina. We must stand for the people of America, who are continuously saying: Let's use common sense. That's the issue here today. Common sense. If we all know this is not going to be the project that's ultimately proposed, let's take it off the table. Let's not spend American taxpayer dollars. Let's preserve the business community of Garner, North Carolina, and all the good folks there who are potentially going to lose their homes. Let's do it now. Let's not wait. This is a ridiculous situation, and I think the American people have had just about enough of it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, so much for allowing me to stand for the people of Garner, North Carolina.

Mr. CARTER. If the gentlelady would yield for a question, if I understand you correctly, the main reason for this route is because of the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act?

Mrs. ELLMERS. Yes; that is correct.

Mr. CARTER. It is a mussel, you're saying?

Mrs. ELLMERS. It is. It's a particular mussel. Let's find the name just so you're familiar with it. It is the dwarf wedge mussel, and apparently that dwarf wedge mussel is found down in the wetlands of the lower area there, so they have avoided that area. And then there are some other wetlands there as well. Certainly there are ways we can work around these issues and not go through an entire town that has been developed for years and years.

Mr. CARTER. This is the town, here, which they are going to go in and condemn basically all of the town?

Mrs. ELLMERS. Go right through, go right through the very middle of it.

Mr. CARTER. Yes, I can see why people are a little upset about that.

Mrs. ELLMERS. And the thing is, there is potential for that highway to go through there, but right now as we

really concerns me is that we have the ability to become energy independent within a relatively short period of time.

Everybody would like to see us move towards alternative sources of energy and clean-burning fuels to help the environment. I don't think anybody opposes that. The problem is in the process. Do we want to become more energy dependent on the rest of the world?

Now we get between 25 and 30 percent of our energy from the Middle East. Anybody who has been watching the news at all knows that there is a war going on in Libya, Egypt is in turmoil, and Bahrain is having problems. There are potential problems in Jordan and in Saudi Arabia. Now if something goes wrong over there—and Iran is trying to undermine us by, under the covers, doing everything that they can to stop us from getting energy and to put us in a trick bag—if the Suez Canal is bottled up, if the Strait of Hormuz is closed or the Persian Gulf is closed, we are going to lose or have substantially delayed as much as 30 percent of our energy. You can imagine what that would do to this place.

The prohibition against drilling in the Gulf of Mexico takes away about 11 percent of our energy, and the President won't allow us to have permits in that area.

Now, he says that he is concerned about it because of the environmental damage that was done by the oil spill down there when the derrick blew up. What isn't said is that the tankers that come from the Middle East and from South America spill more oil, spill more oil than that environmental tragedy that took place in the gulf spill. People don't realize that.

Now, we can drill in an environmentally safe way and we can do it in a number of places in this country and move rapidly toward energy independence. We can drill up in Alaska in the ANWR, and people in the environmental community say: Well, we're worried about the bears up there and the small animals and so forth.

I've been up there. Does anybody have any idea how big Alaska is? It is three-and-a-half times the size of Texas, and there's only 500,000 to 600,000 people who live in Alaska, and all the rest of that is wilderness except where we are drilling. If we drill in the ANWR, we could produce a great amount of oil and energy that would make us less dependent on Saudi Arabia, the Middle East, and on the communist dictator in Venezuela, Mr. President Chavez.

So we are not doing what we should do to make sure that we provide energy for this country and make sure that the cost of energy is low so people can afford it, so employers can afford to hire more people and produce more goods that could be sold here and around the world.

□ 1650

The President, for whatever reason, is blocking this, and I just can't understand why; but I think the American

ENERGY FOR AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 30 minutes.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, one of the things that the American people are really upset about right now is gasoline is \$3.50, and in some parts of the country it is close to \$4 a gallon. And the President of the United States and his administration, for whatever reason, is obstructing our ability to become energy independent.

On February 17, U.S. District Judge Martin Feldman, who gave the Department of the Interior information on the deepwater drilling in the Gulf of Mexico earlier, he gave the administration 30 days to rule seven deepwater drilling permits okay, to approve them. He overturned the ban put in place in June of 2010 that allowed the government to arbitrarily impose a moratorium that would cause irreparable harm to businesses along the gulf coast. In fact, it will cost as many as 24,000 jobs. But the thing about it that

people need to know that and that they need to be talking to the President, to the administration and to other Congressmen and Senators about this because, if everything goes south over in the Middle East or if the President of Venezuela decides to cut us off, we're going to see oil prices go up, up, up and the cost of gasoline go to \$3, \$4, \$5, \$6 a gallon. It's already over \$3.50. If it gets to \$6 a gallon, it's going to have a devastating impact on this economy. In fact, it already is having a devastating impact.

If you talk to 18-wheeler truckers, the people who haul goods and services all across this country, they'll tell you that they can't afford to keep their prices low for trucking our goods and services if the price of diesel fuel goes above \$4 by very much a gallon. Yet it is above \$4 a gallon right now, and it's trending higher.

If we have a problem in the Middle East or in the Gulf or in South America, wherever we get oil, it's going to have a tremendous impact, not only on our ability to buy gasoline at the pump or to provide oil for heating and for our electrical companies to provide electricity to keep our lights on, but it's going to cost us more when we go to Walmart, when we go to the grocery store, wherever we go to buy goods, food and services, because the truckers who truck those goods across the country are going to have to pay more for their fuel, and they'll pass that along to the consumer in higher prices. So this has a devastating impact on our economy because we depend too much on foreign oil.

Another thing I think everybody in this country ought to know, Mr. Speaker, is that we have the largest reserves of coal in the world, which could be converted into oil if we were to use coal-to-liquid technology. We could get as many as 5 million barrels of oil a day in the not-too-distant future, and the amount of oil we could get out of coal/shale is up to 8 trillion barrels of oil. In North and South Dakota, they just found one of the biggest oil reserves in the whole world that we could use to bring down the price of energy in this country, but we can't drill there because the President and the administration and the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Energy are blocking that.

Now, I know a lot of people around the country say, well, we've got to be concerned about the environment—and we do have to be—and we ought to be transitioning into these other technologies, but that's going to take 10, 15, 20 years. To get a nuclear plant up takes forever because you have to go through all the permits and all the governmental regulations. Sure, we could get there, but it's going to take time. In that interim period, we're dependent on fossil fuels, and we're getting those from the Middle East, from South America and from the Gulf of Mexico when we can drill there.

So it's extremely important, Mr. Speaker, that we pay attention to this

and send a very strong signal to the administration that it's time for us to get on with drilling here in the United States in order to become energy independent.

I want to talk about one more thing, Mr. Speaker, which I think is extremely important. It deals with our southern border, between us and Mexico. The President of Mexico told President Obama that he did not want any government agents from the United States—the FBI or our DEA—to be able to carry weapons when they're in Mexico.

We just had one of our agents shot to death in Mexico about 2 weeks ago. It was one of our special drug agents that we had in Mexico. These agents have no ability to defend themselves. One of them was killed, and the other was severely wounded. Along the Texas American border, we've had all kinds of problems. We had a Border Patrol agent just shot recently and killed. We have farmers all over the place and ranchers down there who are scared to death to go out of their houses because these people are coming across the border—drug dealers and people who are bringing illegal aliens in.

Some of the farmers are even selling their ranches. We have one fellow down there who has had a 6,000-acre ranch in his family for over 100 years, but he sold his farm. Joe Aguilar sold his ranch because he said he's had enough. They're going across his ranch every day. We have another rancher down there who found a cache of narcotics on his land. He turned it over to the Drug Enforcement Agency. Days later, thugs came into his house and beat him and his wife half to death. The thugs said, If you do this again, we'll kill you.

Now, how would you like to live in that kind of an environment? Well, you say, That's right on the border. That can't happen here. It's 80 miles north of the Mexican-American border. It's 80 miles into the United States right now. We have signs posted, saying it's not safe for you as an American citizen to go south of here between that 80-mile marker and Mexico. Can you imagine that? Americans are afraid to even walk on American soil because of drug dealers, thugs, illegal aliens, and people who are transporting them into the country who might kill them.

We had one Border Patrol agent who was shot and killed about a week ago. When he was shot and killed, we found out that he had told these drug dealers or illegal aliens or people who were bringing illegals in to stop. Since they wouldn't stop, our Border Patrol agents were told they had to use beanbags. Get this. They had to use beanbags to fire at these people who were across the border illegally who may have been drug dealers or whatever. The fellows they were pursuing turned around with AK-47s—automatic weapons with high-velocity bullets—and shot and killed this one Border Patrol agent. The President of the United States told them the first thing they

should use if they suspect people of bringing illegal drugs in and they can't get them to stop are these beanbags.

I can't imagine anything like that. These people are risking their lives day in and day out. Some are being killed, and some are being taunted day in and day out. They can't even defend themselves down there. President Obama, along with the President of Mexico, agreed that our DEA agents, when they go across the border into Mexico, can't even carry weapons.

How many people do you think who are trying to enforce our drug laws and who are sent down into foreign countries to defend this country against drug dealers and drug cartels are going to want to go down into those areas when they can't even protect themselves? Would you want to do it? I wouldn't want to do it. I'd want to have a weapon so I could at least try to survive in the event they tried to kill me.

Unfortunately, the President of the United States just said in the last few days that he will not allow any of our agents—FBI, CIA, DEA or any of them—to carry weapons when they go into Mexico because the President of Mexico, Mr. Calderon, said that he doesn't think we should.

Well, we're in a war down there on that border. If you talk to the people in Texas, they'll tell you there is a war between us and the drug dealers and the thugs who are coming across that line into our country; and there is a high suspicion that we're seeing al Qaeda- and Taliban-type terrorists coming across the border into the United States as well.

There was an article that was written just recently. I'd like to read part of it, Mr. Speaker.

It reads: "In Texas, nearly 8,200 farms and ranches back up to the Mexican border. The men and women who live and work on those properties say they're under attack from the same drug cartels blamed for thousands of murders in Mexico. 'It's a war, make no mistake about it,' Texas Agriculture Commissioner Todd Staples said, 'and it's happening on American soil,' in this country."

"Texas farmers and ranchers produce more cotton and more cattle than any other State, so Staples is concerned this war could eventually impact our food supply, and calls it a threat to our national security."

"To raise awareness, Commissioner Staples launched the Web site ProtectYourTexasBorder.com. It's a place where frustrated and scared farmers can share their stories."

"One Texas farmer, who asked not to be identified, said it's common for him to see undocumented immigrants" and drug dealers "walking through his property. 'I see something and I just drive away,' he said. 'It's a problem. I've learned to live with it, and pretty much I've become numb to it.'"

Isn't that a sad commentary on this country? We can't even defend Americans in Texas and Arizona.

Another farmer, Joe Aguilar, who I talked about earlier, said, "You either have to beat 'em or join 'em, and I decided not to do either," so he sold his farm of 6,000 acres that his family had had for 100 years.

Our farmers and ranchers can't afford their own security detail, Staples said. We're going to become more dependent on food and commodities from other countries if we don't do something about it.

The President sent 14,000 National Guard people or 17,000 National Guard people down to the Gulf of Mexico when that oil spill took place off that derrick, but we've only sent 1,400 National Guard troops down to the Texas American border, which is 1,980 miles long.

We are never going to solve that border problem unless we really realize that it is an area that we have to focus on, that it's a war, that our citizens are in danger down there, and that we can't any longer allow drug dealers to have sites in the United States where they have binoculars and weapons so they can watch for the Border Patrol agents and so they can tell their counterparts to bring drugs across the border or to bring terrorists across the border because they know that the coast is clear.

□ 1700

This is something that we can't tolerate. We need to protect our border agents. They ought to have guns that they can use to stop these people. They shouldn't be shooting beanbags at them. And we certainly shouldn't be asking our CIA, DIA, DEA agents to go into Mexico to fight the drug dealers and find out what's going on and tell them they can't even have a weapon to protect themselves. This is insane.

The other thing I talked about earlier was the oil situation. It's insane for us to become more dependent on foreign energy at a time when our economy is floundering, we've still got unemployment at around 9 percent, business people can't make plans because they don't know what their energy costs are, and the people who go to work are paying \$3.50 to \$4 for a gallon of gas.

We can do better, and the President ought to do better. And I hope, Mr. Speaker, that the message will get to the White House loud and clear before it's just too late and our economy is hurt further.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

OBAMACARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 30 minutes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, it is again a privilege to be recognized to address you here on the floor of the House of Representatives. And it's a privilege to sit here in this Chamber

and listen to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) talk about these critical issues for the United States of America.

Each of us that come down here on so many days come here for the purpose of bringing up these critical issues and informing you, Mr. Speaker. And while that's going on, there are people all across America that are listening in and deciding for themselves the priorities and deciding for themselves what kind of job we're doing here in Congress.

I'd love to step in on the immigration debate and burn up about 30 minutes talking about that, but Mr. Speaker, I need to have this discussion with you about ObamaCare. There are a fair number of different strategies that are working here in the House of Representatives—and perhaps a number of different strategies, to some degree, going on in the United States Senate—but the circumstances are this:

Almost 1 year ago, ObamaCare passed the United States Congress and was messaged to the President, where he eagerly signed the bill. It was a combination of legislative shenanigans that took place. The bill itself that came to the floor was not a product of committee; it was a bill that was written by Speaker PELOSI's staff and her office with who knows what input and it was dropped on us in a fashion that didn't allow us an opportunity to evaluate it there, then, or on the spot. It was a combination of two bills. One of them was ObamaCare as it went out of the House over to the Senate. The Senate then promised, on the condition that ObamaCare be passed—and the votes that were necessary to pass the basis of ObamaCare were generated because the Senate decided that they would, under a reconciliation plan, avoid the filibuster rules of 60 votes in the Senate. They sent us a reconciliation plan that altered and amended ObamaCare itself. And in that package was a promise from the President of the United States that he would issue an Executive order that would take care of the concerns of the pro-life Members—pro-life Democrats who wouldn't vote for ObamaCare as long as it funded abortion.

And so the audacity of the President of the United States to take the position that he could amend legislation that passed this Congress by Executive order—which is not a constitutional position, Mr. Speaker—but that audacity was swallowed by enough people that they voted ObamaCare out of the House marginally. The reconciliation package that came from the Senate squeaked out of there because of the promises that were made and came over here and was passed because of the promises that were made. And the final cap on it was the President's Executive order that was supposed to amend ObamaCare.

And what do we have in all of this mess? We have 2,500 or so pages that are so convoluted—and if anybody in

this Congress, any lawyers out there that propose to be experts, anybody that's staff on Energy and Commerce, or former Speaker PELOSI, or anybody else out here, I don't think there's a single person on the planet, no matter how good their background, no matter how intelligent, no matter how well read, no matter how many research books they might have to work with, if you would shut them in an office and cut the wires and the wireless to the outside world, not a single person out of these 6-plus billion people on this planet could read ObamaCare and be able to analyze all that it does or its implications on the lives of 300-plus million Americans. It's not possible to do so. We did, I think, a very good job of analyzing what it was in broad terms.

Some of us knew going in that there was deceptive language written into ObamaCare that automatically appropriated funds that would set up the implementation of ObamaCare—even if Congress appropriated no money to it, that would put the implementation in place and churn it on in perpetuity, Mr. Speaker. Some of that information I believe came out of some of the members of the Energy and Commerce Committee that had been analyzing this bill last fall. I believe that we had some verbal discussions on it—not here on the floor necessarily, but on-the-side conversations that I had with some of the better-informed Members of this Congress, and they aren't all here any longer in this 112th Congress.

But as we came into January, I'm thinking about how we unfund ObamaCare. And it has been my argument all along, Mr. Speaker, that the strategy is this: That first, a lot of us used all of our energy to do the best we could to kill ObamaCare. In spite of all of that, in spite of the tens of thousands of people that came from every single State in the Union to come in here and surround this Capitol and tell them keep your hands off of my health care, still the former Speaker of the House marched through the crowds with her over-sized gavel in her let-them-eat-cake moment and imposed ObamaCare on America.

Shortly after the moment that that vote went up on the board I went down to the people that had—and I say surrounded this Capitol; it wasn't just a human chain around the Capitol, it was a human doughnut around the Capitol. It was six and eight people deep all the way around the United States Capitol, unbroken, human doughnut around the Capitol, still with thousands of people left over in the corner, so to speak. If you envision a circle—there isn't one, I understand, but they were standing in clusters by the thousands. Still, not part of that human doughnut, they came here and said keep your hands off of our health care.

That bill finally passed here on the floor and was messaged to the Senate. And I went down with that group, as did MICHELE BACHMANN and several