

nothing to the national debt, but reduces it. It adds nothing in taxes and it lets us control those things.

This bill, and I will add, the gentleman's work and my colleagues from California and across this Nation, was written by us and the American people, not lobbyists, not special interests. We sat in a room together and agreed to get along, to try to come together on things that we could work on to make this country work.

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That's going to be introduced today. It can happen. We owe it to the American people to get that done. Let's roll up the sleeves, tap that innovation, do the right things, get to work, and make this country energy independent. Let's secure our future both from a security standpoint and an economic standpoint and create jobs right at home.

Believe it or not, there are solutions coming right out of this Chamber.

CONGRATULATING GAIL ROMIG

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, each year the White House recognizes outstanding teachers for their contributions to the teaching and learning of mathematics and science through the prestigious Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science. On April 28, President Obama named 85 teachers as recipients of the 2010 award, one of which was from the Fifth District of Pennsylvania, Mifflin County resident Ms. Gail Romig, a teacher at State College Area School District.

Today, I want to thank Ms. Romig for her dedication to her students and commitment to the field of mathematics. We live in a global economy that is ever-changing and where America is forced to continually adapt, innovate, and find new ways to remain competitive in the global marketplace. Our competitiveness relies on the excellence of individuals in technical fields such as math and science. We rely on dedicated individuals like Ms. Romig to help create our next generation of technical minds.

From coast to coast, from urban enclaves to rural towns, teachers across the country are utilizing their expertise and creativity to equip the next generation of Americans to succeed and to lead.

Thank you to Ms. Romig and others like her all across the country that are working to ensure America is competitive for generations to come.

AMERICAN CONSERVATION AND CLEAN ENERGY INDEPENDENCE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join in with my colleagues in the introduction of legislation that we will be discussing later this afternoon: the Infrastructure Jobs and Energy Independence Act of 2011.

First of all, I would like to thank my colleagues who spoke a moment ago, Congressman TIM MURPHY and Congressman TIM WALZ, both who talked so importantly on the need to get our Nation's energy house in order.

Since the long gas lines of 1973, policymakers on both sides of the aisle have attempted various efforts to pursue an energy policy that would reduce our dependence on foreign sources of energy. And what has been lacking through all of those efforts since 1973 is a long-term plan that has bipartisan buy-in which we can stick to both in the near term and longer term to reach those goals. Why hasn't it happened? Because, unfortunately, too often here in these Chambers the lost art of the political compromise has gone away.

But today, with the introduction of the bipartisan Infrastructure Jobs and Energy Independence Act of 2011, we have an opportunity to come together as a House, to come together as a Nation. This is what the Bipartisan Energy Working Group has done over the last few months to really put together a piece of legislation that reflects past efforts, commonsense ideas that will enhance our path toward energy independence and national security through the following means. First, it would increase the production of domestic oil and gas on the Outer Continental Shelf. It would also increase sources of alternative energy utilizing clean energy technologies whenever possible. In addition to that, it would dedicate a fixed percentage of the royalties that we receive from oil and gas that is derived from Federal lands both onshore and offshore, the second-largest source of revenue to our Nation's Treasury, to the following purposes:

First of all, it would invest in our infrastructure revitalization and renewal that provides more jobs that are sorely needed. It would invest in conservation programs. It would invest in environmental restoration projects. It would invest so importantly in renewable energy research and development so that once again we can regain the lead around the world. It would invest in clean energy technology as well as increasing development of existing as well as traditional energy sources, like improving our transmission lines. And it would provide energy assistance for those most in need. Sharing a portion of such royalties with producing States also would provide an incentive for those States. And it would increase the diversification and efficiency of America's transportation system, among other things.

As a Nation, we must work together toward realistic energy policy. At the end of the day, we cannot afford to take any energy sources off the table. As many of you know, I am a firm be-

liever in using all of the energy tools in our Nation's energy toolbox. And that's what we need to do. Conventional energy, together with renewable resources and a strategy for energy conservation, will best serve our long-term energy needs—the best management practices our Nation has to offer.

As we create new comprehensive energy policy to reduce our dependency on foreign sources of energy, reducing our dependence on those nations, it will make a big difference in America. I believe it's important for us to understand and agree to realistic transitional timelines as we embark upon this bipartisan energy policy both in the near term and the long term.

Finally, I look forward to cooperating and collaborating again with the members of the Bipartisan Energy Working Group and other Members of Congress to address ways in which our Nation's energy sources can best be utilized to help us secure that balanced energy future in the 21st century, which is what all Americans want us to do. I believe this legislation that we will introduce this afternoon will put us along that path for a long-term secure energy future for America in the 21st century.

IMPLEMENTING SMART ENERGY PLANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. NUNNELEE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. NUNNELEE. This morning, in Tupelo, Mississippi, Whiteside's Restaurant is quiet. The lights are turned off. Tables around which coffee and conversation had flowed freely, a place where I have enjoyed many great meals, is quiet this morning. And on the front door there's a sign that simply says, "Due to the economy and Uncle Sam, Whiteside's is closed. Donna Whiteside said that the driving force in her closing her business was higher taxes, increased gas prices, and a sluggish economy. Higher gas prices have become a cruel tax on all Americans. Donna Whiteside saw it as her customers had shrinking disposable incomes because of higher gas prices. Donna Whiteside saw that the cost of her groceries were going up because of higher gas prices.

What is not helping Americans get relief at the pump is the stalling of energy production by this administration. Since taking office, President Obama has actively delayed, blocked, and stalled American energy production—and the American people are sick of these stalling tactics. That's why the House of Representatives is concentrating on three key initiatives that will reverse the Obama administration's policies that are hurting families and small businesses, destroying jobs, and increasing our reliance on foreign oil.

Last week, the House passed the Restarting American Offshore Leasing

Now Act. It will require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct oil and natural gas lease sales in the Gulf of Mexico and offshore Virginia that have been delayed or canceled by this administration. In fact, if we don't have an oil lease this year, it will be the first time in my lifetime that the American public has not had that.

Yesterday, the House voted on the Putting the Gulf of Mexico Back to Work Act. Since the drilling moratorium was officially lifted in October, the administration has chosen to drag their feet and stalled the permitting process in the gulf. Twelve rigs have already left the gulf for other regions, taking hundreds and even thousands of jobs with them. This steady decline in oil and natural gas production is costing the United States \$4.7 million every day in lost revenues. This act speeds up the drilling permitting process and will put thousands of Americans back to work.

Today, we'll vote on the Reversing President Obama's Offshore Moratorium Act. The administration's actions have placed the Atlantic coast, the Pacific coast, and areas of Alaska off limits. This Act will implement a smart drilling plan requiring the administration to move forward on American energy production in areas containing the most oil and natural gas resources.

In north Mississippi, we're working at leading the way toward helping our Nation become energy secure. All three of these bills combined can create up to 1.2 million jobs that will generate revenue that our Nation needs, and it will put us on the path to achieving energy security, of more American oil, more natural gas, clean coal, nuclear energy, and new technologies such as wind and solar.

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Donna Whiteside and the thousands of businesses and families around America need to know that the House of Representatives is listening to them. The House Republican American energy initiatives will free the American people from the Obama administration's stalling games. If the Senate will consider and pass this legislation, it will put an end to higher gas prices that are straining budgets and are compromising our energy security.

REMEMBERING THE VICTIMS OF THE VIOLENT TENNESSEE STORMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DESJARLAIS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DESJARLAIS. Mr. Speaker, today I come to the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives to remember the four victims who tragically lost their lives in Bledsoe County as a result of the severe storms and tornadoes that struck middle Tennessee on April 28, 2011.

Loretta Winters Bellos was dearly loved by those in her community. She

was described by friends as a generous and beloved friend who will be greatly missed.

Loretta's sister, Patricia Lynette Thompson, attended Brayton Baptist Church in Graysville and was previously very involved in the Tremont Baptist Church. Those that knew her said that her faith and her church family were a very important part of her life. Her family says they will remember her as "the best mother, grandmother and wife in the world."

Debbie Gibbs Fox was known as an avid animal lover and her husband, Harold "Sonny Boy" Hudson Fox, was described by friends as someone with a lightened spirit who was always a joy to be around.

To all the families and friends of each of these victims, I'm sorry for your loss and offer my deepest sympathies.

I would also like to take a moment to recognize the many emergency management service workers and volunteers that have worked tirelessly to help the victims overcome this terrible tragedy. While touring the damage left by these storms, I was extremely touched by the kindness and generosity of the many people who were there to immediately lend a hand to their neighbors in this time of great need.

I know that the rebuilding process will be difficult and that much was lost, but I'm confident that our community will get through this. My wife, Amy, and I are keeping the families of the affected members in our thoughts and prayers as they begin the process of rebuilding their lives. May God bless you.

CONSTITUENT WORK PERIOD RECAP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BARLETTA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, once again it is a privilege to rise this morning and share with my colleagues in the House what my neighbors at home shared with me during the last constituent work period. During those 2 weeks in April, I met with business and community leaders in Wilkes-Barre to see how they're working to keep their downtown alive and vibrant. For example, they converted an old storefront, right in the heart of the city, into a business incubator which encourages local entrepreneurs and start-up firms. The Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business and Industry is also trying to restore the city's Irem Temple, a local landmark that is a truly beautiful building, one of the last buildings of its kind in the United States.

I toured an ongoing flood control project in the city of Scranton. There, the Army Corps of Engineers is working to make sure the flood walls meet new standards to protect thousands of residents and dozens of businesses. These constituents have been very pa-

tient, waiting decades for their relief. Now, the Corps of Engineers and the Federal Emergency Management Agency are finalizing plans that will provide the protection they deserve.

About 200 people came out to my Home to House public forums, where they learned about the issues we're tackling here in Congress. I was eager to talk with them about Medicare reform and about the steps we're taking to cut the outrageous overspending. Most of my constituents understood what we're doing here, especially the senior citizens. They know that we're trying to save the future for their children and their grandchildren. Many of my constituents also told me they don't want us to raise the debt ceiling without securing substantial budget cuts.

But everywhere I went, my neighbors asked me what we're doing here in Congress to lower the price of gas. Over the 2-week constituent work period, regular unleaded gas cost between \$3.90 and \$4 a gallon. People would come up to me at the gas station as I was filling up and tell me that we need to work harder here to solve this problem. I am happy to report that this week and last I voted on two bills that will put thousands of Americans back to work, while increasing American energy production to help address rising gasoline prices.

There are two events in the constituent work period that stand out for me. One was speaking to a class of students at St. Jude's School in Mountain Top. These bright, eager young men and women were curious about what we do here in Congress. They asked insightful questions. They wanted to learn about Washington. They offered some insights on how to make their futures brighter. As I continue to examine education and workforce programs as a member of the House Education and the Workforce Committee, I will remember these students and their advice.

The second event was the arrival of the Patriot Flag in my hometown of Hazleton. This giant symbol of the United States is traveling around the country to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the September 11 attacks. It was my privilege to stand on the steps of city hall and help first responders, law enforcement, Boy Scouts, and members of the military fold the Patriot Flag.

Less than 36 hours later, we learned that Osama bin Laden was dead. The death of the most visible face of international terrorism is a historic event, and it is one that unified our country. My neighbors in the 11th District of Pennsylvania are proud to congratulate our brave men and women in our Armed Forces and intelligence services, and we thank all of them and their families for their continuing sacrifices. We also commend President Obama for taking bold action.

The spontaneous celebrations after bin Laden's death in front of the White