

would have voted "yes." For roll call vote 524, "Reaffirming the United States commitment to a negotiated settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, and for other purposes," I would have voted "aye."

For Friday, July 8, when I, as well, missed votes for that reason, official business, for roll call vote No. 525, I would have voted "no." For roll call vote 526, I would have voted "no." Roll call vote 527, I would have voted "no." Roll call vote 528, which interferes with the chaplain's duties in the United States military, I would have voted a resounding "no." For roll call vote 529, I would have voted "no." Roll call vote 530, I would have voted "no." And for roll call vote 533, I would have voted "yes."

Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the Chair regarding my absence from rollcall votes 515–524 on Thursday, July 7, 2011.

I was not able to cast my votes during rollcall 515–524 because I was on official business. I would like to state for the RECORD how I would have voted had I been present.

For rollcall vote 521, on agreeing to an Amendment to H.R. 2219 offered by Representative WELCH of Vermont, "An amendment to limit the use of funds to not more than \$200,000,000, provided by title IX under the heading 'Operation and Maintenance, Army,' may be available for the Commander's Emergency Response Program. Also, the amount otherwise provided under such heading is reduced by \$200,000,000," I would have voted yes.

For rollcall vote 522, on agreeing to Amendment No. 4 to H.R. 2219 offered by Representative COLE of Oklahoma, "An amendment numbered 4 printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD to prohibit the use of funds be used to implement any rule, regulation, or executive order regarding the disclosure of political contributions that takes effect on or after the date of enactment of the this Act," I would have voted nay.

For rollcall vote 523, on agreeing to Amendment No. 97 to H.R. 2219 offered by Representative FRANK, "An Amendment to add a section at the end of the bill which reduces the total amount of appropriations by \$8,500,000,000 not to be derived from amounts of appropriations made available by title I ("Military Personnel"), under the heading "Defense Health Program" in title VI, or by title IX ("Overseas Contingency Operations")," I would have voted aye.

For rollcall vote 524, on motion to suspend the rules and agree as amended in H. Res. 268, "Reaffirming the United States commitment to a negotiated settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, and for other purposes," I would have voted aye.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the Chair regarding my absence from rollcall votes 525–533 on Friday, July 8, 2011.

I was not able to cast my votes during rollcall 525–533 because I was on official business. I would like to state for the RECORD how I would have voted had I been present.

For rollcall vote 525, on agreeing to Amendment No. 1 to H.R. 2219 offered by Representative FLAKE of Arizona, "An amendment to reduce funds made available by this Act for

'Operation and Maintenance, Defense-Wide' by \$250,000,000," I would have voted "nay."

For rollcall vote 526, on agreeing to Amendment No. 2 to H.R. 2219 offered by Representative FLAKE of Arizona, "An amendment to reduce the amounts made available in sundry sections of title IV," I would have voted "nay."

For rollcall vote 527, on agreeing to Amendment No. 3 to H.R. 2219 offered by Representative FLAKE of Arizona, "An amendment to reduce the amounts made available in sundry sections of title IV," I would have voted "nay."

For rollcall vote 528, on agreeing to Amendment No. 77 to H.R. 2219 offered by Representative HUELSKAMP of Kansas, "An amendment numbered 77 printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD to prohibit the use of funds to implement the curriculum of the Chaplain Corps Tier 1 DATD repeal training dated April 11, 2011" I would have voted "nay."

For rollcall vote 529, on agreeing to an Amendment to H.R. 2219 offered by Representative POLIS of Colorado, "An amendment to prohibit use of funds in the bill to maintain an end strength level of troops in Europe to more than 30,000 and to reduce military personnel accounts accordingly" I would have voted "nay."

For rollcall vote 530, on agreeing to an Amendment to H.R. 2219 offered by Representative KUCINICH of Ohio, "An amendment to prohibit the use of funds for military operations in or against Libya except under a declaration of war against Libya pursuant to clause 11 in section 8 of article I of the Constitution" I would have voted "nay."

For rollcall vote 533, on agreeing to a resolution H. Res. 340 to "Providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1309) to extend the authorization of the national flood insurance program" I would have voted "yea."

TODAY'S AFRICAN AMERICAN PARENTS

(Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, there have been a number of points that I would just like to bring really to the attention of my colleagues and to indicate that I hope we can do better. That's my message: I hope we can do better.

I hope we can do better than having two Presidential candidates in the Republican Party sign a pledge that would suggest that children of slaves were much better off than the children of African American parents today. We know that we have a high number of single parents throughout the United States raising children. But just read the slave narratives and the biography of Frederick Douglass to know that there were no marriages among slaves—it was not allowed—and that children were torn away from their parents. And husbands or wives or those who had given birth or created children were torn away from each other. Slavery was a destructive part of this country, and never compare it with the life that we have today.

I would also suggest that if we are negotiating the debt ceiling, we should not have leaders in the room that make the statement that we'll have no resolution because President Barack Obama is President. I'm insulted, offended, and it is not becoming as adults.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

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HOUSE ENERGY ACTION TEAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DUNCAN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the last Congress was known as the Congress of bailouts, takeovers, taxation, and regulation. This Congress is working to be the Congress of free markets, achieving American energy independence, and job creation.

Back in May, the House passed three sweeping pieces of energy legislation designed to help end our country's dependence on Middle Eastern oil and help create American jobs by allowing deep sea energy exploration and production.

Tonight we are going to talk about American energy independence and how energy is a segue into job creation, how we can put Americans back to work. As a proud member of the House Committee on Natural Resources, we passed three I think very, very strong bills that would put America back to work, especially in the Gulf of Mexico. We passed H.R. 1229. This is the Putting the Gulf Back to Work Act. It would end the Obama administration's de facto moratorium in the Gulf of Mexico in a safe, responsible, transparent manner by setting firm timelines for considering permits to drill, which will provide certainty and allow employers and workers to get back on the job.

I don't know how many Members of Congress have been out in the Gulf of Mexico like me and looked at offshore drilling and offshore energy production. There is a difference between drilling and production. Drilling is finding the oil, drilling that well. Then they move a production platform in there to start producing that. And I talk with my colleagues from Louisiana and Mississippi and Texas that understand that the Gulf States are hurting because it's not the Big Oil companies that are out of work. It's the folks that work on those rigs out in the gulf, doing the day-to-day labor of tapping that American energy resource.

But it's also the folks back on the beach that are providing the service industry, the ones that go out and provide the food and the transportation to the workers going back and forth. It's the ships that pull the anchors when the drilling platform wants to move somewhere else. It's the pipefitters and

welders back on shore that are providing the necessary service to that industry. We want to put the gulf back to work. We urge the Senate to pass H.R. 1229 that we sent over in May. And let's put the Gulf of Mexico back to work. In a few minutes I'm going to yield to the gentleman from Louisiana, who is going to talk more about that.

Then we passed the Restarting American Offshore Leasing Now Act, which would require the Obama administration to move forward and promptly conduct offshore lease sales in the Gulf of Mexico. I served on the Outer Continental Shelf 5-year Planning Subcommittee that looked at oil and natural gas leases on the Outer Continental Shelf all around the United States. And I know what a convoluted, long process it is to have a lease sale.

The administration is failing America by not having lease sales in the Gulf of Mexico, or off the coast of Alaska, or really anywhere else on the Outer Continental Shelf. It's time to restart that leasing program so that we can tap the American resources that we have in this country. H.R. 1230 is another bill we passed out on May 5. The Senate needs to act on that one, Mr. Speaker. We passed it with a bipartisan vote of 266-149.

The third bill that came out, Reversing President Obama's Offshore Moratorium Act, H.R. 1231, another one the Senate has failed to act on. This would lift the President's ban on new offshore drilling by requiring the administration to move forward on the 2012 to 2017 lease plan with energy production in the areas containing the most oil and natural gas resources.

We know where those resources are. They are off the coast of Mississippi and Alabama and Texas and the western Gulf of Mexico. They are also off the coast of South Carolina and Virginia on the Outer Continental Shelf. They are in the Alaskan Sea and off the coast of Alaska, where recently we saw the EPA deny Shell Oil Company an air quality permit.

Now, Americans need to listen. This isn't an oil drilling permit. They were ready to go. They had their drilling permit. But the EPA denied them an air quality permit. And a drilling platform does flare off the gas that sometimes seeps through when they are drilling for oil, and they flare that gas off to keep from having a dangerous explosion like we saw in Deepwater Horizon. Flare gas, natural gas that's flared off.

They are denied an air quality permit because 70 miles away on the coast, 70 miles away is an indigenous village of 250 people. So this administration's going to keep us from harvesting our natural resources in Alaska by not denying a drilling permit, but by denying an air quality permit to a drilling platform in the Alaskan Sea because it might impact a small village in Alaska. That's the kind of administration policies that we're dealing with and we're fighting here in this Congress.

Folks, we want to put America back to work. Energy is a segue to job creation. Think about it. The refining capacity that needs to be expanded as we expand the harvesting of oil and natural gas. New refineries in this country. It's been over 30 years, I believe, since we've had a new refinery permit in this country. We often think about energy, we think about fossil fuels, hydrocarbons, oil and natural gas. But when I talk about energy, I think about expanded nuclear power and how one nuclear power plant can put 5,000 people to work, 10,000 people to work in my area with new construction jobs. And then once the construction phase is over with, we've got long-term, good paying jobs like we have at the Oconee nuclear power plant in Seneca, South Carolina.

I believe in nuclear power as a stable, reliable source of energy in this country. We've got to expand nuclear power. We've got to look at modularization and miniaturization. At any given time, folks, we've got over 100 small nuclear reactors floating around the seas of the world in the United States Navy. And you know what? We haven't had a single mishap. Small, modularized nuclear reactors that work. Thinking outside the box, do we do that for small communities, neighborhoods, or small cities with smaller nuclear reactors like we have on aircraft carriers and submarines?

Recent studies from the American Petroleum Institute showed the United States is poised to create thousands of new jobs next year only if the Federal Government stops blocking the permitting process. There is a study that says that in Alaska alone—this was conducted by the University of Alaska—over 54,000 jobs could be created and sustained with deep sea production in Alaska.

I am going to yield in a little while to the gentleman from North Dakota, who will tell you that North Dakota's got one of the lowest, if not the lowest, unemployment rate in the United States, 3.2 percent. It's because of the energy jobs that are being created in the Bakken oil field in North Dakota. He is going to tell you more about that because it is a wonderful success story on how energy-related jobs expand the economy and put Americans back to work.

At this time, I would like to yield to the gentlewoman from Washington State, who knows that putting Americans back to work can happen if we harvest the natural resources that we've got in this great country.

Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER. Thank you for that. I couldn't agree more. You know what we're talking about here is jobs, job creation. And the best way to do that is to explore for energy here, to develop our energy resources. And that's why I am pleased to be a part of this Congress.

When I hear from folks back home, they say, "Jamie, we sent you to D.C. for solutions." And that's precisely

what this Congress has been about. With the gentleman you are going to hear from and others, I helped launch the House Energy Action Team, or HEAT is what we like to call it. It's an initiative with my House colleagues that we've started to bring forward energy solutions that put forward jobs for Americans. And I am a solutions-oriented person.

Solutions are definitely what America needs right now. And I see this from the vantage point of my corner of this country in southwest Washington State. Here is a good example. Just a few weeks ago, I met with John Leber. He is the owner of Swanson Bark in Longview. And basically, his business moves material for the forest products industry, including biomass for energy producers.

Now, the first problem we have encountered, and he has seen here with regard to some of these regulations, is we have very strict boiler MACT rules that are on hold. But if they are implemented, they would cost the forest products industry alone \$5 billion to \$7 billion to implement. And that's not hiring new people, that's not expanding their business, that's just costs of complying with Federal Government rules.

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And there is more. The second problem is thousands of manufacturing and industrial facilities across this country use incinerators that would be affected, meaning they are going to have to spend more money, not to hire more people or to grow their business, but to comply with Federal Government rules.

Now, instead of stepping on the air hose of employers like John Leber, I cosponsored legislation and a solution that would allow the EPA to make the Boiler MACT rule more reasonable. Makes common sense; right? In turn, this would help the promising industry of biomass and the jobs that would come with it.

Now, the gentleman from South Carolina very rightly pointed out the energy exploration solutions that we passed here off this House floor. This is just one solution that I think is going to help, and I want to add it to those four. We are working on that. HEAT members here tonight are joining together to call on the Senate.

We have passed at least four bills that provide American energy solutions that will promote American energy jobs. The Senate needs to step up. I am going to share for you and reiterate some of those bills that we passed because they are very important. This is important to America's energy security and America's energy independence.

The first one is the Jobs and Energy Permitting Act of 2011. This would have simply required the EPA to speed up its approvals for energy exploration in Alaska. That's it. Speed up your approvals. That's pretty simple.

Developing and safely exploring for energy here would have produced a million barrels of oil per day, and it would

create more than 54,000 American energy jobs. Now, not all of us like the gentleman from North Dakota have such low unemployment rates. I think it was quoted as about 3 percent. I would be doing backflips for 3 percent unemployment.

In southwest Washington, we have had double-digit unemployment now for 3 years, 3-plus years, and it's horrible. So we need to get these things moving here in America and create those jobs, especially when it's within our reach to do.

And one of the other solutions that we worked on as a team was reversing President Obama's offshore moratorium. This would contribute over 1.2 million new jobs for Americans who are hurting across this country; 800 million in revenue would have come in if the Senate would move this bill.

Now, as we are talking about the deficit and deficit reductions and the debt ceiling—and I agree with what one of the Senators said. We don't need new taxes; we need new taxpayers. So getting more people to work, paying taxes is going to help us get out of the debt that this country is facing, and it's going to create more jobs.

The third bill that we worked on and passed off of this House, one of the solutions that we have already pushed through this Chamber, is the Putting the Gulf Back to Work Act, and that bill simply reinforces safety measures through permitting inspections while increasing American energy.

I hope you are sensing a theme here tonight: American energy solutions and American jobs.

And the fourth one that we were pleased to get off this floor a few months ago was the Restarting the American Offshore Leasing Now Act. Now, this moves us forward with lease sales that were cancelled or postponed by this administration.

Remember, I mentioned stepping on that air hose. Well, a lot of the rules that have come out this administration have stepped on the air hose for employers in our Nation, and it has got to stop. We need to increase America's energy supply. This would increase thousands of American jobs, and it's common sense. All of these commonsense solutions that increase American energy production make it cheaper for families to fill their car with gas, to heat their homes, and it would give relief to American employers.

I am merely asking, and my colleagues here tonight, we are merely asking the Senate to imagine a future in the United States where energy is abundant and affordable and where we aren't riding the roller coaster of high gas prices that. Basically, those prices are set by other nations that don't like us very much.

So I encourage our Senate colleagues to join in passing and pursuing more solutions like these that the people of this country deserve.

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. I was out in Washington State with the

gentlewoman from Washington several years ago, looking at nuclear power, looking at the Hanford site, talking about reprocessing of nuclear, spent nuclear fuel rods and how reprocessing can deal with some of the waste by-product but can also provide an energy source for our nuclear power reactors, and I know you are interested in that as well. So thank you for your comments.

I next want to introduce and yield to the gentleman from Ohio, who understands that these are resources that we are talking about here in America. All the natural gas resources don't belong to President Obama; they belong to the American people. And it's time that the American people speak loudly that we want to put Americans back to work, providing American solutions for American energy issues.

Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio. I thank my colleague.

We are sitting here today with unemployment over 9 percent and rising, 22 million Americans out of work, and what are we getting? We are getting an administration whose bureaucrats have got a stranglehold on America's energy future.

I stood in this Chamber just a couple of months ago when the Prime Minister of Australia addressed a joint session of the House. I know my colleagues will remember that. And the Prime Minister said something that was profound. She related a story. She talked about being a young girl sitting in front of her television and watching Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin land on the moon and thinking to herself, Wow, those Americans can do anything.

She went on to give her speech, and she talked about the long relationship between Australia and America and how we have solved many of the world's problems. At the end of her speech, she said, You know something? She said, I am not that young girl any more. I am the Prime Minister of our country, but today I still believe that Americans can do anything.

That was profound, and I think for many of us it was like you could hear a pin drop here in the House Chamber because what she said was something that we need to hear from our national leaders, and we are not getting that kind of leadership here in America today.

I believe that Americans can do anything. We saw, when President Kennedy decided that we were going to the Moon in 10 years, he mobilized our academic institutions. He engaged our industrial base, our military, our political will, our economic will. Every fabric of our culture was focused on that goal.

I remember as a young boy watching the space race shots from school or being sent home because it was like a national holiday. We had a national vision. We saw industries crop up. We saw hundreds of thousands of jobs created. We saw young people going into

disciplines that would prepare them for careers in aerospace and astronautics and other disciplines to support our conquest of the space frontier.

I am so proud to be a part House Energy Action Team because we are trying to promote that same type of national vision around energy independence and security.

I believe if we had a national vision that said, look, over the next 10 years we are drawing a line in the sand starting today, and we are going to establish a goal to be energy secure and energy independent over the next 10 years. And we are going to drill for our own oil; we are going to drill for our own natural gas. We are going to continue to mine coal, and we are going to learn how to use it environmentally soundly and safely. We are going to expand our nuclear footprint. We are going to look at our alternative forms of energy like wind and solar and find out where they fit into our overall energy profile. But what we are not going to do is sit on the sidelines any longer and depend on foreign sources for our energy and put future generations at risk. I believe if we had that kind of vision, we would again see industries crop up. We would see hundreds of thousands of jobs created as a result. And at the end of the day, we would learn how to produce and store and use energy in ways that we have never, ever imagined, because guess what? Americans can do anything. With a national vision around energy independence and security, Americans would be put back to work.

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I live in a district and represent a district where unemployment rates are popping up well over 10 percent. Some of them 12-plus percent. Ladies and gentlemen, people from my district have lost hope in the American Dream. We need a national vision around energy. That's what this House is promoting. That's what my colleagues and I are striving for. I, too, urge the Senate, take action on these bills. Get America back to work, and let's secure America's energy future.

Thank you for letting me have some time.

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. I, too, believe in America's greatness. And I stood here and heard her talk about the world is looking to America to be great again. This is an area that we can be great in. I've traveled around my district recently and asked folks about rising gas prices and the impact that they were having on the family budget, how they were having to reach deeper into their wallet and not take out the \$20 bill, but take out the \$100 bill to fill up their tank for their family for their normal commute, grocery shopping and other things they do. Americans are hurting.

The gentleman from Ohio is on the Natural Resources Committee. And when we passed those bills out to this floor and passed those bills out from

this floor to the Senate, you saw an immediate reaction by the administration, saying that we need to harvest American resources and increase domestic energy. The action of this Congress, we saw a reduction in fuel prices the next week, I think a 15-cent per gallon reduction, in my district. That's the kind of impact, that's the kind of signals we can send to the market by doing the right thing for the American people and focusing on domestic production and putting Americans back to work.

The gentleman from Louisiana came from the oil and natural gas industry. He and I have had numerous conversations about the impact that the moratorium and the de facto moratorium has had on the economies in the Gulf States. And it's not only the loss of jobs and the income taxes that are associated with that, but it's the loss of revenue to the States from the royalties that they get from the oil and natural gas production.

But in this country, at a time when we are hurting economically from loss of jobs and the lessening of income revenue to this country, keep in mind that I believe second only to—well, actually third only—to income tax revenue and corporate income tax and other revenue and borrowing. The revenue this country receives from oil and natural gas royalties is third only to those two things.

So I would like to yield to the gentleman from Louisiana, because he has got a unique story to tell.

Mr. LANDRY. I thank the gentleman from South Carolina. I thank him for speaking today on what I believe is one of the most important areas in this country for getting our economy back on track. And I want to share with him and the rest of you an email I received today.

Today I received an email that said, JEFF, my wife has finally convinced me to send you an email and update you on where I am in Louisiana. It says, I still have not returned to work, but it is looking like I may go to work in early August. And I'm going to be headed out to a particular block out in the deep waters of the Gulf of Mexico to do a P&A job, a plug and abandonment job.

So this isn't looking for additional oil and gas or producing more oil and gas. It's a plug and abandonment job.

He says, I'm not sure when we will actually get back to drilling or completing wells. This moratorium is beginning to impact me. I am fortunate that my company has kept me on since I'm a consultant, not an employee. But my income is down significantly, and my concerns about the future of the Gulf of Mexico has me looking elsewhere. I recently turned down an opportunity in Malaysia but may not turn it down again. At a time when our country is hurting, it is unbelievable that our leaders are putting more of us out of work, yet still giving money to other countries. The government

spends. Spending and total unconcern for the working people of this country is wearing on us. It is also annoying to see that one of the first cuts in government spending is in education, but numerous other entitlement programs continue to keep money going towards them.

He is fed up. And the sad part, the sad part about this is that this is an American worker. And our government is basically saying, to him, a guy who has a trade, who is plying his trade, that you can no longer ply that trade in this country. If you want to continue to earn a living for your family, you need to go to another country. You need to go to Brazil or Malaysia or to Egypt and follow the rigs out of the Gulf of Mexico, out of this country, in order to keep your job.

Think about that. We are basically telling Americans right now that we don't like the job that you've been doing. Regardless of how dangerous it was and regardless of how many weeks away from your family offshore you spent, Christmases, Easters, that doesn't count. Your job isn't good enough for this country anymore. You need to go somewhere else to ply your trade.

That is just absurd when we have an opportunity in this country to do all the things that fix the economy. We can reduce the deficit, just like the gentleman from South Carolina said, we could, by increasing drilling in the Gulf of Mexico and domestically, we could send an additional \$1.7 billion, \$1.7 billion, to the Treasury to reduce our deficit simply by increasing our drilling activity. We could increase employment. We all know we need it. The jobs numbers came out last week, 9.2 percent unemployment. We are not creating jobs. We can create jobs by drilling domestically.

And I'm not talking minimum wage jobs. There is not a person in the Gulf of Mexico on a drilling platform who makes minimum wage. Those jobs pay good money. So we can do that. We can reduce our deficit, and we can reduce unemployment.

Do you know what else we can do? We can lower the price of energy for Americans out there. Drilling domestically does all three. It creates jobs, reduces the deficit, and decreases energy costs to Americans all over the country. It lowers the price at the pump. The President has already acknowledged that supply affects the market when he went out there and released millions of barrels—30 million barrels—out of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. It's the wrong reserve, Mr. President. The proper reserve is in the Gulf of Mexico, in Alaska and elsewhere in this country.

I thank the gentleman from South Carolina for giving me this time.

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. What would happen if we had a hurricane? We're in hurricane season, and we've released 30 billion gallons from the reserve. Wasn't that there for that purpose?

Mr. LANDRY. That is why, the last time prior to this when we did release oil from the strategic reserve was exactly that instance, when Hurricane Katrina affected the refineries and the production platforms in the Gulf of Mexico. And you're right. We should not be using that reserve unless it is an emergency.

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. I tell you what, you've hit on something that I think we need to talk more about in this Congress, and that is the administration taking the easy road, trying to lessen fuel prices at the pump for Americans. But it was a short-term, short-lived impact, if it had any impact at all.

I appreciate your comments on the administration having a "drill there and not here" policy, encouraging exploration and drilling off the coast of Brazil when we've got the resources right here in this country. The Outer Continental Shelf off the coast of my State or off the coast of Virginia, where they have an energy policy that wants to tap those resources. In the Alaskan Sea off the coast, where we know there is proven oil and natural gas resources. An expansion in deep-water in the Gulf of Mexico. So I appreciate your comments.

The gentleman from North Dakota knows all too well what energy production means for jobs. The Bakken oil formation in North Dakota, Montana, and up into Canada even, has tremendous resources that can be harvested. There's an estimated 12 billion barrels of oil in North Dakota alone in the Bakken formation.

□ 1920

I hope he will talk about the impact that jobs created in North Dakota have on that unemployment rate.

I yield to the gentleman from North Dakota.

Mr. BERG. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, we know the tremendous potential of energy production here in America. Recent studies show just how much energy we have available. In fact, by 2020, in the West we could produce as much oil and gas as the U.S. is currently importing from Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, Venezuela, Colombia, Algeria, Nigeria, and Russia combined. The West alone has the potential to produce more than 1.3 million barrels of oil every single day. That's more than our current imports from Russia, Iraq, and Kuwait combined. If we're serious about creating American jobs, serious about lowering energy prices, and breaking our dependence on foreign oil, we must invest in energy resources and reserves within our borders.

In North Dakota, we know the potential of oil and natural gas. The last U.S. Geological Survey estimated that the Bakken field held nearly 4 million barrels of recoverable oil; but the new estimates, as the gentleman from South Carolina said, suggest that the

Bakken formation offers at least 12 billion barrels of recoverable oil.

We produce more than 355,000 barrels of oil each day. We are home to the largest deposit of lignite coal in the world. Our State holds tremendous wind potential as well, and we've attracted thousands of jobs to North Dakota. It is projected by 2020 that jobs in the oil industry will increase by over 16,000. That is a direct result of developing these energy resources in North Dakota. That's a 35 percent increase over 2010 levels.

North Dakota's unemployment is less than 3.5 percent. It's 3.2 percent. In western North Dakota, where Bakken development is taking place, we can't find enough people to work. In that county, unemployment is below 1 percent. Starting wages for people are over \$80,000. We need people to help increase this supply of oil.

I just think every day when I'm out here and coming back from North Dakota, imagine what we could do if our whole country had the same approach as we do in North Dakota, the jobs that we could create across this country and the security that we could protect within our country by reducing our dependence on foreign oil. We could reduce our 9.2 percent unemployment rate if we move forward with energy development. We have to get rid of the burdensome regulations which are preventing businesses from creating American jobs.

This is not the time to restrict energy production and prevent jobs from being created. Yet that is exactly what the President's policies have done. In fact, I've kind of joked, if you want to see exactly what not to do to increase the supply and lower the price and reduce the cost of energy for individuals and businesses, small businesses across America, look at what's happening out here in our Nation's Capital.

The President's official moratorium on drilling cost 12,000 jobs. Declining energy production in the Gulf of Mexico is costing the U.S. over \$4.7 million a day in lost revenue. Overreaching government regulations continue to hinder energy production in the United States. With thousands of Americans still out of work and prices at the pump remaining high, now is not the time to slow down our energy growth. Now is the time to invest in our own energy resources. We need a long-term, commonsense energy plan like EmPower in North Dakota. We need a plan that will lower energy costs, that will create jobs and break our dependence on foreign oil. We did it in North Dakota. We can do it across America.

We can create good-paying American jobs, we can lower energy prices, and we can break our dependence on foreign oil. It's time to work together to end the overregulation, to encourage energy development, and to work to strengthen America's energy potential.

Thank you.

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. I thank the gentleman.

The time is now. The time is now to stop the policies of this administration of taking Federal land off the table when it comes to wind, solar, and hydrogen.

The wind farms. There's a bill in our committee that deals with NOAA's obstacles to wind farms off the coast. To the Federal land in the West that's off the table for solar, land that's owned by you, the taxpayer, that is not available for new solar panels and solar technology and wind farms and expansion of the power grid and power cables and transmission lines.

The folks in Oklahoma have known energy production for a long time. I was talking with a gentleman from Oklahoma earlier about a new technology to lessen our dependence on Middle Eastern oil by using the gray matter that God gave us to create new technologies.

I now yield to the gentleman from Oklahoma to share some exciting news with us coming out of his great State.

Mr. LANKFORD. Thank you.

I am honored to get a chance to talk about a great American resource, and that is our energy. Let me take you back a little bit. I'm 43 years old. I can remember in elementary school I was allowed to be able to work with the debate team in high school. It was my honor to be the littlest guy in the middle of this high school debate team. In the 1970s, the debate topic that year was "Resolved, America Should Pursue Alternative Energy Options."

Since the 1970s, we've been talking about hydroelectric and solar and wind. We've been trying to advance this technology, and I hope we will continue to crack the code on that to make those energy solutions work well for us. Since the 1970s, we've been talking about trying to get off fossil fuels and—guess what—it is still the dominant resource that we are using in our country, and it is still the most effective resource to be able to move our vehicles, to be able to heat our homes and to be able to produce these petrochemicals that are used in almost everything that we lay our hands on nowadays.

I hope one day I can run my car off a pinwheel that's on the top of it, but currently I run my car on gasoline. I hope I can heat my home one day with a solar panel on the roof, but currently the technology is not there to be able to do that. My home is heated with natural gas. There's electricity in all the different dynamics that come in. I look at it and I say, at 43 years old, I've been hearing my whole life that we need a national energy policy—drilling, pipelines, production, retailing—to be able to work out a plan that we can run as a country that is all of the above that is every bit of our energy, but that is not ignoring the energy that we have here.

I can tell you I am sick to death of hearing how we need to shut down fossil fuel production in the United States because of environmental reasons,

knowing full well that we will just import more of those fossil fuels from all around the world. The United States produces the cleanest energy on the planet. If we want to have clean energy, whether that be fossil fuels or alternative fuels, we should be doing whatever it takes to make sure we drill here, that we produce here, and that we are the ones that are using the energy in the cleanest method possible. No one does it cleaner than us. I can assure you we don't go to Saudi Arabia and find out they produce energy cleaner there.

So if you're truly concerned about planetary issues with the environment, you would make sure all the production that's needed in the United States is produced in the United States to make sure that we continue to protect that.

Let me take you to my beautiful State. Come walk into Oklahoma sometime. Since 1949 in Oklahoma, we've been fracking for oil. What many people are calling some new technology of fracking, and everyone seems to be afraid of it, and say, Is it going to hurt the groundwater and is it going to hurt all these things, I smile and I say, Come to my beautiful State. Since 1949, we've been fracking. Over 100,000 times we have fracked in Oklahoma; 100,000 times plus. Come drink our water, come breathe our air, and come see our absolutely beautiful God-given State. We can do this in an environmentally friendly way.

We have in my district 5.7 percent unemployment because we have a lot of great energy companies that are doing a terrific job of both protecting our environment and providing jobs for the people in our area. We can do this. And to flippantly say, these are dirty oil companies and they're big oil companies, and we've got to do whatever it takes to punish Big Oil is flippant.

I was in a hearing not long ago with Timothy Geithner. He was discussing punishing Big Oil and getting more taxes on that. I was able to say to him, Mr. Secretary, are you aware that the majority of energy companies in the United States are independent producers and they're small companies? Ninety-five percent of the drilling and the oil and gas production that happens in the United States is done by independent producers, these 18,000 small companies that are out there.

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These 18,000 small companies that are out there, they account for 67 percent of the total energy production in the United States. These small companies, on average, have 12 people on staff, 12 employees. These are not big, giant companies. And throwing around terms like "Big Oil" and attacking them makes me smile when I think about what is happening in Oklahoma with lots and lots of service companies and producers and drillers that are really doing great jobs.

I was talking to one of those companies recently. Guess who they are targeting to be able to hire? Their favorite people to be able to hire are returning vets because of their work ethic and because of the skills they are bringing back. They are companies specifically going after returning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans to be able to hire them.

It was interesting. We were talking about drilling. You go into a drilling platform, and they say their favorite people to be able to hire are actually tank drivers returning from the war zone because they are used to driving equipment and looking at a screen and dealing with multiple things all at once. These are folks who are employing our veterans and providing great jobs.

Recently, I was on a fracking site, being given a chance to watch it. When you go into a frack site, I don't know what your image is of what it looks like to actually see a well being fracked, but it is high-tech jobs, people on computers, as well as people and pumping. It is trucks and people providing food and people providing all the equipment. It is both people with big wrenches and people with small computers. And you see this multitude of jobs that are provided by oil and gas and by fossil fuels that we are producing right here in America.

We are at a moment that we can either say: We want all green jobs. We want to destroy the jobs that are in producing fossil fuels and try to create new jobs in green jobs; or we can say: Let's do both. Let's encourage the growth of green jobs, but let's not, in the process, also discourage one of the most productive industries that we have in the United States, and that is providing our own energy.

I would love for folks to come to Oklahoma and to be able to see the great companies that are doing some very innovative things.

If I may mention one more thing, just today, one of our companies, Chesapeake, announced a new initiative that is taking natural gas and injecting it into a heat-up service and using biomass and injecting air at a high temperature, and out comes gasoline that runs in our cars. They are not asking for any kind of Federal grant. They are doing it on their own and producing brand new clean energy that will run the current vehicles we have now. At the same time, they are, in the next 10 years, dropping \$1 billion to upgrade an infrastructure for natural gas on the highway system so big trucks can run on natural gas and will have a place to be able to fill up.

Industries are doing this. They want to see this. This is a way that great American companies can produce great American energy. They are patriots, and I hope we will continue to encourage these folks.

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. The same American greatness that the gentleman from Ohio was talking about, where innovation meets a need.

We have a need for energy independence, and innovation is meeting that need by creating a brand new company and technology to put gasoline in America's cars and trucks and tractors. And what an amazing story coming out of Oklahoma. Hydraulic fracturing is something that I think is next on the table for this Congress to address because we are seeing a lot of misinformation out there about hydraulic fracturing contaminating drinking water. Folks, that is just wrong. There hasn't been a single instance where a hydraulic fracturing operation has contaminated drinking water.

From my understanding, most of the natural gas shales, such as Marcellus or the ones out in Oklahoma and Texas, are 10,000 feet to 6,000 feet deep in the earth. And most wells where we get our drinking water are 300 feet to 1,000 feet. A thousand feet would be a deep well, a very expensive well for Americans. That's why they don't go that far. They look somewhere else for water.

The fracking takes place much deeper, so there hasn't been a single instance. The misinformation out there has been refuted by you many times in Oklahoma when you say, I repeat, Come drink our water in Oklahoma. I appreciate that.

A key Republican energy proposal is the National Petroleum Reserve Alaska Access Act that will cut through bureaucratic red tape and unlock the full potential of energy resources in the Alaskan Natural Petroleum Reserve by ensuring that oil and natural gas are developed and transported in a timely and efficient manner. But there are delays in accessing that from this administration. And whether these delays are the result of government incompetence or ideological vendettas, the fact of the matter is that these regulations are costing American jobs and raising energy prices.

The House has offered a clear path on job creation and economic recovery. That path is less taxation, less regulation, less government intervention, and more economic certainty in the marketplace.

The folks from Kansas have talked to me numerous times about energy, and so I would like to take an opportunity to yield to Mr. HUELSKAMP from Kansas to talk about what is going on out there and that great American State's focus on American energy independence.

Mr. HUELSKAMP. Thank you. I appreciate the opportunity to speak today. I am very interested in learning what continues to happen every day in our other States, particularly our State to the south.

Being from the State of Kansas, I would like to talk a little bit about the coal industry. You might say, Kansas and the coal industry, what does that have to do with Kansas?

I am a farmer by trade, and we produce a lot of corn and wheat and

soybeans and many other things. But in order to produce those, we need a lot of electricity. A number of decades ago we built a coal-fired electrical power plant in western Kansas. It generates electricity that covers six to seven States. About 5 or 6 or 7 years ago, we said we need more electricity. Our economy continues to grow, and we need more electricity. We began the process in western Kansas to expand our electrical production. We need more electricity.

If the economy is going to grow—and I'm sorry to say, now the economy is not growing very quickly under this administration, and let me tell you why. It is called overregulation. It is called litigation. It is called the attempt by this administration and others outside that are working together with this administration to stop the generation of more electricity, more energy of various types. We need more energy. We need more American energy, and we can produce that. We are trying to do that right now in western Kansas. We are trying to produce more jobs.

This administration and folks close to this administration—and this is hard to believe—they have said that you want 1,900 construction jobs. You want to create 1,900 jobs in western Kansas to grow your ability to produce American electricity. You know what the answer is from this administration? You know what the answer is from environmental groups? You know what the answer is? They said: No, we don't want your jobs. We don't want 1,900 jobs in western Kansas.

We have rural communities all across western Kansas, and they depend on this power. Actually, if they don't have more electricity, we will begin to see brownouts in less than a decade in a rural area.

We are trying to grow our production of energy, of coal-fired electrical power, and this administration says: No, we're going to sue you. And the EPA says: No, we're going to stop you with new regulations. Various outside groups are throwing lawsuits. It is death by litigation. And that is not only stopping our power plants. They are stopping power plants all across the country.

Now, it is hard to understand. I talk to my constituents and they say: Why can't we have more electricity? Who is opposed to this? Who is opposed to jobs? Somebody in Washington is opposed to jobs. There are regulators all over this country, particularly in our Nation's capital, who say: No, I would rather you pay for \$5 gasoline. No, I would rather you have higher electricity rates.

If we don't generate more electricity in my State, in western Kansas, they anticipate a 40 to 50 percent increase in electricity rates. But by the time that would happen, 4 or 5 years from now, they'll say: Why didn't you do something about it? That is why I am here tonight. We have to do something about it now.

Our competitors across the way in China, I believe they have figured it out. They recognize that you need more energy in whatever form. We need more energy. We need to produce more electricity. We need to produce more diesel fuel and more gasoline. We need an all-of-the-above strategy. But when you have an administration and a culture in Washington that is dedicated to eliminating access to energy, when you have an Energy Secretary that suggests that Americans need to pay \$5 a gallon on gasoline, our Energy Secretary suggests that we need to pay \$5 a gallon on our gasoline, what is going on?

We need to pay more? No, we need to pay less. And the way we do that is not having a brand-new policy, a new program in Washington. No, we need to let American entrepreneurs continue to do what they have been doing for years, and that is producing a needed product called energy. And we can produce it in many ways in Kansas and all throughout the Midwest and all throughout the Nation. But when you have this narrow agenda of those in Washington that have dedicated their lives to make certain that our electrical prices go up, our energy prices in all forms go up, that is going to cost us more unless we can turn on the entrepreneurs.

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Actually, there was a report from our U.S. Chamber of Commerce—and there are folks in this town who get upset when you talk about people who create jobs because it is actually the private sector that creates jobs. It estimates there are 351 stalled energy projects across America, and the one in western Kansas, Sunflower Electric Cooperative, is just one of those, but there are 350 others. They estimate that if those stalled energy projects would move forward that they would create 2 million jobs in the short term just in construction, but in the long term, they would create affordable energy to allow us to compete across the world. Frankly, as our energy prices increase, our ability to compete and export and to compete with China and many other countries is incredibly diminished.

So we need—we must—and are responsible here in this Chamber for freeing up entrepreneurs. We are responsible for forcing the U.S. Senate to come to the table and actually do what they talked about doing.

I don't think there is a Member of Congress in the House or Senate who went home and said, Do you know what I like? I like high energy prices.

Nobody said that. No.

They went home, and said, We're doing everything we can.

They're not doing everything they can. The U.S. Senate is not doing a single thing to help this along, and the administration is doing everything it can to make sure our energy prices go up.

That's so frustrating to me because we do have an easy answer. Let's let American entrepreneurs, American en-

ergy companies—basically small businesses—move forward. In my district, we are heavily dependent on agriculture, but the second largest industry is the oil and gas industry, and we must continue to encourage them to move forward.

I appreciate the opportunity to visit about this tonight. It's something I am very passionate about because the people in this House who are working for it cannot be blamed for high energy prices in the future, because we are doing what we can do today. Thank you for the opportunity.

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. Thank you, the gentleman from Kansas.

You hit on something. Obama's Energy Secretary, Steven Chu, before he was nominated to be the Secretary of Energy, wanted to figure out how to boost the price of a gallon of gasoline in this country to the levels in Europe. At the time he made that statement, gasoline in Europe cost around \$7 to \$8 a gallon. That's what the administration's Secretary of Energy really expects and wants the American people to pay for a gallon of gasoline. When fuel prices got to be \$4 a gallon—\$4.35, \$4.50 a gallon—in August of 2008, I know what that meant for my small business, and we only had two trucks on the road. Americans can't afford that when we've got the resources here in this country to meet our energy needs.

I know that the gentlewoman from North Carolina fully understands that we've got the resources to meet our needs and that we've got to expand that and put Americans back to work through harvesting American resources. So I yield to the gentlewoman from North Carolina.

Ms. FOXX. I want to thank the gentleman from South Carolina for taking on this Special Order tonight and for bringing with him a group of his colleagues who are called "freshmen" around here, but I will tell you the people watching this tonight don't know you guys are freshmen. You're doing a wonderful job, and I want to compliment you on the fantastic job you've taken on here to explain to the American people some of the issues related to energy independence.

I was home, like you were, during the Fourth of July and Independence Day, the little break that we had. I was home, talking to people about the fact that we need to declare a new war for independence, and that is a war for energy independence. So I agree with all of the comments that you all have made, and I want to piggyback on what our colleague from South Carolina was talking about.

In April 2011, families spent an average of \$369 each month on gasoline, which represented 8.9 percent of monthly household income, which was an increase from the average of 5.7 percent. Now, that is hurting the people in my district, and it is hurting the people in your district.

We need to continue to point out that this administration has created these problems. These weren't created by Republicans. Democrats were in control of the Congress from January of 2007 to January of 2011. We were in the minority during those 4 years. In the last 2 years, the President and the Democrats were in charge of the entire Congress. They have the responsibility for what has happened in terms of energy prices.

What Republicans have done in the last 4 years, as well as this year, is we have put forth and passed legislation that would eliminate needless permitting delays that have stalled energy production. We have put forward commonsense solutions to these high energy prices. Again, we believe in an all-of-the-above principle. We want to see us have all of the things that we need in this country to make us energy independent.

Our government should be promoting our energy resources, not blocking their development. If we don't do that, we are going to continue to have a 9 percent unemployment rate. As for all of the comments that have been made about what producing energy in this country can do to unemployment, we must do that, and until we get an administration that understands that and a larger number of people in Congress who understand that, American families are going to be hurting.

So I want to compliment all of you tonight who have come here and spoken out about these issues.

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. I yield to the gentleman from Kansas. He comes from an energy background—supplying parts to the energy production field.

Mr. POMPEO. I thank the gentleman from South Carolina. I just want to say a couple of things quickly.

I had a chance to hear, speaking before me, the gentleman from Oklahoma, who was talking about drilling and service companies. Until just over 6 months ago, I ran one of those small companies. It created energy jobs in Kansas and in Oklahoma and in Midland, Texas, and in Kilgore, Texas, and in all the places where American energy can be produced for American consumers. It's not that hard. This President just makes it so. We know we can have safe, clean, affordable energy produced here in America by American innovators, American businesses and American jobs if we will just do the simple things and get the Federal Government out of the way.

Just a few minutes ago, my colleague from Kansas spoke about a power plant in his district in Kansas that we've been trying to build with clean coal technology. We've been trying to build it for years. It's cleaner than the plant that exists today. It will reduce overall emissions in the State of Kansas; yet this administration and our previous Governor, who is now the Secretary of Health and Human Services, just says, No. Don't produce that energy. Don't

produce that affordable energy so we can build things here in America.

I was just talking to my colleague from Colorado about that very same power plant and what it does to his State, the State of Colorado. I yield to the gentleman from Colorado.

Mr. GARDNER. I thank both the gentlemen from Kansas, my neighbors to the east of Colorado.

When you talk about the Holcomb plant, you're talking about something that affected Colorado, my constituents, directly. My district borders western Kansas, and many of the farmers/ranchers who rely on rural electric supplies for their energy were going to rely on that plant. Their ability to get cheap, abundant, affordable energy from that plant was critical to the future of their operations. I know they continue to work on it and will continue to work with their neighbors in Kansas on that. So it doesn't just affect one State. This is a national issue: the ability to generate abundant, affordable energy.

I'll also point out that those same communities in southeastern Colorado were hoping to build wind farms. Do you know what? They also rely on transmission lines, and with that power plant came transmission lines—the ability to get power from point A to point B, from where the resource is to where the people live. So, once again, we have a need for a source of abundant, affordable energy.

Mr. POMPEO. I know we're wrapping up here tonight, but I want to talk about one more thing and how the President's policies and his Environmental Protection Agency are destroying jobs in Kansas.

In Kansas' Fourth Congressional District, we build an awful lot of airplanes. They need an awful lot of electricity to build those planes and to run those plants. Our agriculture community also depends on having the EPA out of the way. Today, I sat in a hearing where the Democrats continued to say we need tighter utility regulations, that we need a set of utility rules that will make it almost impossible to build a new utility plant in America. We need that energy. When we don't have that energy, prices and costs for our farmers go up, and that translates very directly. It translates into the cost of food at the table.

When I talk to seniors, they say, MIKE, we know what we spend money on. We spend it on the simple things. We spend it on food and energy to heat our homes.

If we keep these policies up, we will be pricing our seniors into a place no one wants them.

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It doesn't have to be. We have American energy; we can get it.

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. We're about out of time. I just wanted to thank my colleagues for understanding and expressing very clearly that we have the resources in this

country to meet our energy needs. We need to put America back to work, harvesting those as a segue to job creation. The House Energy Action Team, the committees charged with this, have passed the bills to the Senate. The Senate needs to act. Let's put America back to work solving our energy needs.

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

DEBT CEILING LIMIT TALKS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from New York (Mr. TONKO) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, this evening it is my pleasure to initiate discussion as to the events here in Washington as they affect our debt ceiling limit.

There is much attention being paid to the efforts for America to pay her bills, and obviously America's working families understand what it's all about. They understand that you work hard, you roll up your sleeves, you make ends meet, and you pay your bills on time.

Well, the concern we have today is that as we attempt to get that phenomenon done—as we have many times over the last several years—the bills have been rung up, perhaps by those Members of Congress before us and by administrations before us; but nonetheless, they are bills that need to be paid. And as we go forward, I think it's important for us to recognize that the honorable thing to do is to acknowledge that we need to pay those bills so as not to accrue additional interest charges, pay them as soon as we can, and make certain that we don't draw all sorts of havoc and damage to the American economy and perhaps the international economy as we move forward with the saga of being able to pay our bills with a debt ceiling limit being addressed.

Now, many Presidents have asked for this opportunity so as to be responsible in their administrative role, in their executive role. This President has now been addressing this issue. And we have brought in discussion to enable to authorize that debt ceiling limit being adjusted, that it should be accompanied by spending cuts. And so it has created a certain give and take, a tug of war, so to speak, here in Washington to enable us to pay those bills and have the ceiling limit addressed.

An agenda is being attached that would include spending cuts, spending cuts that in some ways can devastate the working families of this Nation, an assault on many of the needs that they have.

There is, with the Ryan plan—that now has become the “Republican plan,” as it has been passed by this House—would address Medicare as we know it. It would end Medicare, a program that was initiated back in 1965,

took hold about 45 years ago in 1966, and has addressed the economic vitality of many senior households since that time.

Prior to that legislation for Medicare, many of the seniors were victimized, not being able to access that sort of care, not having the health care plans they required. The industry would cherry pick; they would take certain elements of a senior population that were a safer risk, an easier risk. And when it came to affordability, again, a drain on the economic vitality of retirees. Those who would retire at a certain level of economic viability would have that situation dip southward as their medical costs would drain those retirement savings.

And so history has shown that that economic vitality of our senior community has stayed more constant, more durable since the time of Medicare. It has enabled a cushion, a security to be there for our senior population so as they advanced into their golden years, they would have that coverage that was so essential.

There is this correlation of the need for health care with growing older. That's easily understood. And so what we needed was a plan that would provide security and stability, and we found it, and the Nation celebrated in bipartisan fashion. And for decades we have improved the system and addressed it so as to meet the needs of our Nation's seniors.

And now, as we look to address a debt ceiling limit, discussions have brought in a cutting services agenda where we are going to deny certain programs, amongst them Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid being reduced, programs that speak to core needs—Pell Grants for higher education, education aid and Head Start for our youngsters, the workforce of the future. A number of issues under attack, an assault on the middle class, programs that are required for working families, for their children, for seniors, for veterans, for establishment of jobs.

To create a jobs agenda, we need oftentimes to invest. Also at a time when we're asked to invest in a clean energy and innovation economy because there is a global sweepstakes going on amongst the world nations to compete for clean energy with investments that are required for R&D, and you name it, so as to develop that soundness of an agenda and create jobs here, utilizing and embracing the American intellect.

So all of that is put at risk by this frenzy to have spending cuts while we authorize this debt ceiling limit, which allows us, authorizes us to pay our bills, has the executive branch pay its bills, has this country pay its bills, as the President has suggested time and time again.

But the outcome is that many are thinking this is giving us new authorization to spend when in fact it covers the bills of the past. And to accompany their vote here, they would want spending cuts. And so Medicare has