

thank my friend Congressman PITTS for introducing this important legislation.

Just this past week, Iranian authorities renewed an order of execution for Christian Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani, a young father of two. Pastor Nadarkhani was originally arrested in 2009 for protesting the teaching of Islam at the public school that his children attended. He was later charged with apostasy which carried a much more severe penalty. Since 2009 he has been subjected to repeated attempts to coerce him to recant his faith—which he has courageously refused to do. Rather, Pastor Nadarkhani's perseverance in the face of this injustice is a source of great inspiration. In a 2010 letter from prison, he wrote that the true believer, "does not need to wonder for the fiery trial that has been set on for him as though it were something unusual, but it pleases him to participate in Christ's suffering. Because the believer knows he will rejoice in his glory."

Indeed, Pastor Youcef has faced a "fiery trial." And now, according to a February 22 Fox New story, the latest developments mean that Pastor Youcef may be "executed at any time without prior warning, as death sentences in Iran may be carried out immediately or dragged out for years."

Pastor Youcef's case is just the latest example of Iran's attacks on basic human rights, including freedom of religion. In recent years, there has been a significant increase in Iran in acts of repression and discrimination against religious minorities including Bahai's and Christians. These actions show a continuing disregard by Iranian authorities for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as well as its own constitution.

In addition to supporting this resolution condemning Iran for these shocking and flagrant violations of fundamental freedoms, I call on the government of Iran to immediately and unconditionally release Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PITTS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 556, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO BOARD OF VISITORS OF THE UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 4355(a), clause 10 of rule I, and the order of the House of January 5, 2011, of the following Members of the House to the Board of Visitors of the United States Military Academy:

Mr. HINCHEY, New York;

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ, California.

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

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

Mr. PEARCE. Less than 1 month ago, Kathleen Sebelius issued a finding that said that every insurance company in the country would have to offer insurance products, some of which would offend the faiths of many people. This is against our Constitution, and it is against the rights of conscience of a free people.

Mr. Speaker, across religious lines, the people of New Mexico and the people especially of southern New Mexico—Catholic, Protestants and people of no religion, people across cultural lines, and people across racial lines—are gathering this Saturday: this Saturday to protest, this Saturday to stand and say that the government needs to back up out of our church.

This is not a Republican issue. This is not a Democrat issue. This is an issue of the Constitution and of a freedom-loving people.

So I encourage all who are across this United States to begin to organize and stand in the streets to tell the government that enough is enough. We are meeting this Saturday, March 3, in Las Cruces, New Mexico, from 1:00 to 2:30. It will be a very large gathering. There will be speakers from both parties and from all faiths.

We think that it is time for Americans to be united together again, as one people, against a government that has become too strong.

□ 2010

HOUSE ENERGY ACTION TEAM HOUR

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

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. Speaker, I'm here tonight for one reason: to stand up for hardworking Americans who are spending far too much when they fill up at the pump, and I'm here for that same American who turns on the TV or reads the newspaper after a long day at work to see that Iran is threatening to cut off our oil supply out of the Middle East and to see continued inaction by this administration to discourage energy projects, energy production that would lower the price of gas here at home. These are Americans that are scared. They simply don't have the money in their pocket, in their budget to pay for these high prices, \$60 to fill up a tank of gas, \$80 to fill up the tank of gas.

I find it increasingly more difficult to explain to my constituents from rural Colorado why this government isn't advancing policies that will bring

down the prices at the pump. It pains me the look on people's faces when they tell me that they're making \$10 an hour and are paying upwards of \$4 for a gallon of gas. What are they supposed to do, Mr. Speaker, stop going to work because gas is so expensive?

We are facing a significant crisis, and it's a travesty, it's a shame. My colleagues here tonight are here to say we will not stand for it.

How do I go back home this weekend to explain to my constituents why gas prices have risen \$1.80 per gallon since this President took office? How do I explain that this administration may be willing to tap the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, which is only to be used when there is a severe energy supply disruption, instead of opening up more land for exploration, which brings me to my next point.

Mr. Speaker, this administration alleges that it has opened up vast amounts of our lands for leasing. In fact, just a few days ago, on February 23, at the University of Miami, I quote:

Under my administration, America is producing more oil today than at any other time in the last 8 years.

This is simply false, a false telling of reality. While it may be true that new production is occurring on private lands where the President can't involve his anti-energy administration, Federal lands and offshore development is far below what it has been in previous years. Let me cite to you some very startling statistics.

According to an article on E&D on Monday, just a few days ago, production of natural gas on public lands and waters in fiscal year 2011 dropped 11 percent from 2010. That's a drop of 11 percent on public lands and waters in fiscal year 2011. Oil production on Federal lands dropped 14 percent since last year, and this reduction was most significant in the gulf, which declined by 17 percent since 2010.

According to a Wall Street Journal editorial from the other day, drilling plans have historically been approved 73 percent of the time. Since the beginning of 2012, the President has only approved 23 percent.

Approval of an offshore drilling plant typically takes about 92 days right now. That's 31 days over average.

In 2000, just 12 years ago, 32 percent of our oil was from Federal lands. Why? In 2010 that number shrank to 19 percent of total U.S. production. Let me say that again. In 2000, 32 percent of our oil was from Federal lands. In 2010 that number shrank to 19 percent of total U.S. production.

We aren't opening up our Federal lands for development, and that's the reason for the significant drop. The total onshore acreage leased under this administration in 2009 and 2010 is the lowest in over 20 years.

Mr. Speaker, the President has claimed that he is opening up new offshore areas for production and more land for leases. Again, this is false. Many of these lease sales were already

scheduled to take place before he even took office. One was even cancelled for a year by the administration and is now being reinstated. His plan even closes the majority of the OCS to new energy production through the year 2017.

In recent days and months, we have seen the President touting an all-of-the-above energy approach, but his actions speak louder than his words, and they do not promote an all-of-the-above energy strategy. This administration has blocked energy production on Federal lands and decreased overall domestic energy production across the board. And I want to share with you just a few of these examples.

Tonight we are joined by the House Energy Action Team, a group of Members from across the country who are dedicated to sharing with their constituents in this country the policies that we have passed in this House with bipartisan support to encourage energy production to make sure that we are increasing and encouraging natural gas development, oil developments, all of our natural resources in a true all-of-the-above energy strategy. The HEAT action team, the House Energy Action Team, is once again sharing that strategy and contrasting ourselves with the strategy that this President has presented over the past 3 years of his administration.

So the President can claim all he wants to be supportive of an all-of-the-above energy strategy—said it just a few months ago from this podium right behind me in the State of the Union address, supporting an all-of-the-above energy strategy—but let's actually talk, let's actually talk about what the President's policies have resulted in.

On oil and gas, he's withdrawn oil leases from Utah, costing 3,000 jobs; withdrew oil and gas leases from Montana; issued a moratorium on gulf drilling, costing 12,000 jobs; reinstated a ban on drilling off the entire Pacific coast; announced he would regulate hydraulic fracturing.

Again, the President claims to be a supporter of an all-of-the-above energy policy, but on coal he pulled a permit from a West Virginia mine, costing 250 jobs; announced the merger of BLM and OSM, which could move domestic coal one step closer to extinction in this country.

When it comes to nuclear energy, this President has blocked uranium mining in Arizona for 2 years. He has personally abandoned the Yucca Mountain waste site, jeopardizing the future of nuclear energy in this country; imposed a 20-year ban on uranium mining, increasing our 90 percent already, our 90 percent dependency on foreign sources.

Even on renewable energy and this President's green energy agenda, this President has closed all but 2 percent of Federal lands from renewable energy development. He's left open only 670,000 of 30 million acres of land for solar development.

Again, the President claims he is for an all-of-the-above energy strategy, when, in fact, what we have seen is this President is actually for none of the above. This chart—I know it's impossible to read—details the inaction of this administration, in fact, some very harmful actions to our energy policy where he has stopped, delayed, repealed energy production in this country.

Again, tonight, we are going to be hearing from many Members around the country to discuss how we can advance a strong energy policy, one that creates American jobs with American energy, building our energy security for future generations. There is one great way to power our economy, and that's to turn to our energy sector to create jobs and opportunity.

With that, I yield to another great leader on energy issues, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DUNCAN).

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. Well, let me thank the gentleman from Colorado for his dedicated service to not only the State of Colorado but to our Nation.

We have been coming to the floor talking about the increasing prices of energy across America. Since we came back in January, we have taken to this floor to talk about the very poor policies coming out of the administration.

□ 2020

And just to give you an example of that, on Inauguration Day of President Obama, AAA said the gasoline prices in America averaged \$1.84 a gallon. Today, gasoline prices are averaging across this great land \$3.73 a gallon. That is a 102 percent increase during the Obama administration. But yet he will claim, the administration will claim, that they have increased domestic energy production. They've increased onshore and offshore drilling, and apparently oil and natural gas are just bubbling up out of the ground and providing this. But, America, that's not the case. That's not the case. Gas prices are going up simply due to two factors—supply and demand. Those are the things that contribute to the price of a barrel of oil in the world. Supply and demand.

Now, I admit that world demand is up even while United States demand is lower than it was in 2008. World demand is up. So that's one factor. But the supply factor. Americans know that we are tremendously dependent on Middle Eastern oil. We've got the resources here in this country. If this administration will just get out of the way and allow us to harvest our natural resources, we would be energy independent.

But let me tell you what the administration apparently has as a policy goal, and this comes from the White House statement on the Keystone pipeline. The gentleman from Colorado has heard me say this—I think this is the fourth time—but America needs to hear it again because President Obama said this. He said:

Decisions here in Congress to force the decision on Keystone pipeline do “not change my administration’s commitment”—this is from the White House Web site, and I recommend you go look at it for yourself—“it does not change my administration’s commitment to American-made energy that creates jobs”—and listen closely—“and reduces our dependence on oil.”

Now, at one time he was talking about these abundant supplies, this increased onshore and offshore drilling and production in this country. But yet his own words say “commitment to American-made energy that creates jobs and reduces our dependence on oil.”

Now, when you first heard that, you thought, I agree with that. He wants to lessen our dependence on foreign oil and Middle Eastern oil, but no, no, no. That's not what he said. He said lessen our dependence on oil, period. Not foreign oil, not Middle Eastern oil, lessen our dependence on oil.

So you take that with his Secretary of Energy, Steven Chu. Steven Chu, before he was appointed as Secretary of Energy in this country, said this: “Somehow we have to figure out how to boost the price of gasoline to the levels in Europe.”

Now Europeans in England and Germany and France, they're paying \$7, \$8, \$9 a gallon for gasoline. America, under these policies, that's where we're headed. Under the words of Steven Chu, the Energy Secretary, he said: “Somehow we have to figure out how to boost the price of gasoline to the levels in Europe.”

It shouldn't surprise you that's what they want to do—lessen our dependence on oil, period. And that's propagating policies and giving money away to companies that supported him in his election campaign, companies like Solyndra, \$535 million, gone, America, your tax dollars that I know you're working hard for every day.

In South Carolina, my constituents, they go to work every day. And they earn the hard-earned dollars. They go to work, and they're thinking when they're filling up their gas tank at \$3.75 a gallon, \$4 a gallon diesel fuel—I drive a diesel, so last week I couldn't fill my truck up, because I'm hurting just like other Americans, and how much I have to take out of my wallet to fill up my truck, and what I could use that money for in other ways, whether it's to take my family out to dinner or pay off some debt or do some things that we normally would do with that money, but now we're having to take more dollars out of our pockets to put fuel in our car to drive to work. And so Americans are thinking: How many hours of my workday on my job am I working just to pay for the gasoline I just paid to get to work and to get home?

Four dollars a gallon gasoline for diesel fuel, and America, think about this: Think about the farmers that are putting diesel fuel in their tractors to plant the food that you're going to buy

at the grocery store. Input cost. Input cost on the front end affects the price on the back end.

Mr. Chu, the Secretary of Energy, said this. He's calling for gradually ramping up gasoline taxes over the next 15 years to coax consumers into buying more-efficient cars and living in neighborhoods closer to work. This European model where we'll all live close in town and we can walk to work or bicycle. That's the optimal thing in their eyes. We don't live that way here in America. We like our freedom. We like to get in our cars and drive ourselves to work. The policy of this administration is affecting what you pay at the pumps, and it's very clear using the President's own words about gasoline and about oil.

So we are seeing rising gasoline prices, and we've got the power to do something about that here in America. We have the capacity, the resources in this country that far exceed what's found in Saudi Arabia. Far exceed by hundreds of billions of barrels of oil more than what exists in the Saudi oil reserves here in this country. We've got them. We're buying a lot of oil from Canada. We talked about the Keystone pipeline. The gentleman from Colorado and I have talked about this numerous times. But instead of pursuing American energy independence, beyond that why can't we pursue maybe North American energy independence and buy from our largest and best trading partner, Canada, if our policies are going to keep us from drilling off our coast in South Carolina, or off the coast of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas, places where there are proven reserves, and we've been pumping oil for a long time?

Or going onshore. North Dakota. North Dakota has an energy-driven economy. Their unemployment rate is 3 percent or less. They're pumping oil out of the Bakken oil fields there in North Dakota. President Obama is taking credit for increased oil production in North Dakota, but back up, because the oil that's being pumped out of the ground in North Dakota isn't on Federal land, and it isn't because of any policies of this administration. The permits were issued during the last administration and the one before that, and we're producing oil on State and private lands in North Dakota. It's not Federal lands; it's State lands. It's private lands. Unemployment is 3 percent. Good paying, long-term jobs, energy-driven economy in North Dakota.

But guess what? The Bakken oil field extends beyond the borders of North Dakota, and it goes into Montana and other States. Well, if you go across that artificial border between North Dakota and Montana into the same oil field known as Bakken, you're not going to find any energy production over in Montana. You know why? It's because it's on Federal land. And that Federal land has been off the table for energy production and energy exploration. But over where it's on State

and private land, it's gangbusters. It's going gangbusters, 3 percent unemployment in North Dakota. That's a telling sign, America, on what you do when you go after your own resources and you produce American resources to meet our American energy needs.

I heard the gentleman from Colorado talk about an all-of-the-above energy strategy, and I've heard the President here at the State of the Union say the same thing. But, you know, in my opinion an all-of-the-above energy strategy says (a) first, we're going to take care of a proven technology of oil and natural gas to meet our immediate energy needs. And then we're going to continue to expand nuclear power in this country because it's proven, it's tried, and we can expand that.

I applaud the new permit in Georgia for a new reactor. We're going to have one very soon in my home State. It'll be the second in about 30 years where we've permitted a nuclear power plant to provide electricity to this country. But the President, he likes this global warming cap-and-trade scheme. And he says that under his plan of a cap-and-trade system, "electricity rates would necessarily skyrocket." Electricity rates are going to skyrocket. Well, we've got the ability to build more nuclear power plants and permit those that are underway and provide good, stable electricity in this country. So all of the above includes oil and natural gas, energy exploration, offshore, onshore, where we have those resources, and expanding nuclear power plants in this country, looking at the things that are tried and true and allowing the free market, not your tax dollars, America, but the free market to determine the winners and losers with regard to green energy.

If it works, if it can be successful, I guarantee you, there are American investors and worldwide investors that would invest their own hard-earned dollars at their own personal choice to invest in that technology, and they will pick a winner because on the back side they're going to make a profit.

But that's not what's happening. This administration is taking your tax dollars, and they're making your investment decisions for you in companies like Solyndra. They're picking the winners. They're picking the losers. It's wrong. It's got to stop.

Mr. GARDNER. I thank the gentleman from South Carolina, and I know the gentleman from Arizona is going to be joining us in this debate, this conversation tonight.

You mentioned some quotes, some statements made by Secretary Chu. You talked about the statement where the President had said under my plan, electricity rates would necessarily skyrocket.

□ 2030

You talk about Secretary Chu talking about how he wants to boost the price of gasoline to the levels in Europe. Have you ever heard this Presi-

dent talk about expanding production in the United States or adding U.S. domestic capacity to actually decrease the cost of gasoline?

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. Gentleman from Colorado, that's a great example. I've never heard him talk about that. The administration talks about the exact opposite. They want us to pay for what Europeans pay for oil and natural gas. They want to see us move toward a green energy economy, and they want to create policies, tax policy and regulatory policies, that are going to force you, as Americans, to buy what they want you to buy, and that is an electric car.

Mr. GARDNER. And I would point out to the gentleman, too, as he knows, we've seen gas prices increase dramatically around the country. In South Carolina, I think gas prices have increased 10 percent from just a year ago.

The gentleman from Arizona who joins us now in the conversation is—New Mexico—has seen tremendous price increases, as well.

With that, I yield to the gentleman from New Mexico, my neighbor to the south.

Mr. PEARCE. Thank you. I would gladly be from Arizona, except I'm representing New Mexico, and I'll stick there for awhile.

My father worked for the oil industry my entire life. We grew up in the oil industry in southeast New Mexico. Back in the late seventies and early eighties, the company that my dad worked for, Humble, and later Exxon, began to tell all the employees that oil would be out, that it would be finished in eastern New Mexico and that they would need to get their affairs ready to be transferred somewhere else.

Now, my dad retired in the late eighties, and the oil fields are still viable in Lea County, New Mexico, because of increasing technology. The ability to drill laterally has really revolutionized the ability to produce energy, and also the 3-D seismics have been very effective at finding new sources of oil. So basically what we're finding is that the old estimates of how much oil was left in the U.S. have been grossly inadequate. With the new finds all the way across the country, this Nation could be self-sufficient in oil, except there are people here in Washington who absolutely do not want us to be self-sufficient. They want the pressure on the economy. For some reason, they believe that we should have a level playing field with the European countries that have to import all of their energy.

I think that America should be allowed to develop its resources that it's blessed with. I believe that the American people should be allowed to work in careers and in jobs that pay good money. Other people in Washington think that we should shut down all of the timber production, all of the oil and gas production and all of the mines and convert over to hospitality jobs. The hospitality jobs do not pay

enough. They're fine jobs, but they don't pay enough to raise families. So we have these different visions of America where one says we're going to shut off the resources, we're not going to develop them, and the other group says, yes, we must have American energy, we must have American jobs, and we must improve the economy.

We're facing times when our budgets are completely unworkable. This coming year, we're looking at \$1 trillion in deficits. We're going to spend about \$3.9 trillion, and we're going to create revenues of about \$2.9 trillion. Now, people at home can do the math. That's a deficit of \$1 trillion, \$1.1 trillion.

Now, a magical thing happens when we start creating jobs in America. People are saying, Can you cut your way from 3.9 to 2.9? I don't think that we have to do that. Every time that you put someone to work, they come off of food stamps and they come off of unemployment, so the cost of government begins to decrease with every job you create. Additionally, those people will pay taxes. And so if we would allow the jobs to be created, they would be forming daily. If we would just open the doors to energy production in this country, then we would see our economy moving toward balance, and that's what we desperately need. We need our checkbook balanced, because that's the only way we're going to sustain the economic future of this country.

Now, people just can't believe that Washington would put oil and gas off-limits completely. They can't believe that the country's leaders would make life that much more difficult for them to pay their bills, to send their kids to school, and to feed and clothe their children. They can't imagine policymakers in Washington who would willingly do that. And yet you have repeatedly heard the President and his staff say that we need the price of gasoline to go up, we've got to figure out how to increase it. Well, they've figured out how to increase it, and that's simply to limit the drilling of it.

I think this year's elections will pin on the cost of gasoline and the functioning of this economy. People across America are desperate for job creation, not just any jobs, not just minimum wage jobs, but those jobs where you can get in it and make a career, like my father who worked his whole life in the oil and gas industry. It was a good living for his family. That's the sort of jobs that Americans are looking for, and that's the sort of jobs that we can create.

But how are American policymakers putting the oil and gas off-limits? For instance, shale. America is the Saudi Arabia of shale oil. And yet in 2007, the Pelosi House passed a bill that put all of the shale production in Colorado completely off-limits. That's just wrong. We should be exploring every opportunity for energy.

Another way that they're limiting the production is that they're just not processing the applications to drill. So

you have a lot of people who would invest a lot of money right now creating jobs, but the Federal Government will not process the application for permits to drill on Federal lands. Much of the West is Federal lands. New Mexico is about 33 percent Federal lands. Other States have as much as 80 percent Federal lands, and those are being completely eliminated from oil and gas production, from mining, from timber and from other jobs that could be created.

And so we find an administration and a mindset in Washington that says we're going to starve America for jobs, we're going to starve America for energy, and we're going to send those jobs overseas. I think that Americans are waking up and realizing that it does not have to be that way. We don't have to be paying \$4 for gasoline.

People here in Washington routinely say that we cannot drill our way out of the problem. I hear that a lot. But if you look at the cost of natural gas, the price of natural gas today, you'll see that it has diminished tremendously because we have drilled our way out of the shortage that existed just 4 or 5 years ago.

The price of natural gas spiked around \$10. Today it's less than 4. We have to understand that you can produce more energy, you can get the cost down, but a government has to stand aside and let the people work.

I just returned from Vietnam, a known communist country, and yet they're hungry for production of energy. The Communist Chinese are looking for new oil and gas supplies. They're drilling just 47 miles off the coast of Florida, and yet this country will not let American firms drill 45 miles off the coast of Florida. So we continue to see policies come out of Washington that are strangling the economy for oil and gas and driving the prices up.

It's just not the oil and gas, though. The sad thing is they're doing the same thing to electricity. Two electricity generating stations in New Mexico are being told to shut down energy production. We suffered rolling blackouts just a year and a half ago, and we're being told to shut down electrical generation? These are not generators that would not produce. These are generators that they're saying, well, they might be contributing to some pollution. They can't prove it.

The standards that they hold us to need to be measured by a computer, because the naked eye can't see the difference in the haze that they're trying to demand the improvement of. So, again, we see policymakers who are willingly making life more miserable and more difficult for the average American.

The Republicans in Congress today are speaking up for the average homeowner, the average person that goes to work every day, does their job, goes home and raises their family. We need to support those kind of people, and I

compliment the gentlemen, both of them, especially the gentleman from Colorado, for leading this fight for lower energy prices. It's a common-sense thing, and we need to back him up.

Mr. GARDNER. I thank the gentleman from New Mexico. Before he yields the floor, I wanted to ask him a quick question.

I know you've done tremendous work with the Western Caucus. You're a co-chair of the Western Caucus trying to make sure you are eliminating regulations to do what we can to improve the economy of the Western United States, and I just wanted to share with you a quote from our colleague in the Senate, Senator SCHUMER from New York. This was February 27, just 2 days ago, a quote from *The Hill* newspaper. He is talking about trying to find solutions to increasing gas prices. Here is what he had to say:

To address the situation, I urged the State Department to work with the Government of Saudi Arabia to increase its oil production, as they are currently producing well under their capacity.

So, apparently, many of our colleagues, some in the Senate, think that the solution to the way out that we have isn't here in the United States at all. In fact, it's creating more dependency on overseas oil instead of developing in areas like the Western United States.

I know you've done tremendous work to open up access to energy in the Western U.S., and I don't know if you had seen that comment or had time to reflect on it.

□ 2040

Mr. PEARCE. I have not seen the comment, but it's standard that comes from some here in Washington. You have people who are saying, They should develop their resources, but, oh, we should not develop ours. It's that mindset that is killing American jobs. It's that mindset that's killing American energy, driving prices up.

The American families are struggling. Hardworking families are struggling under the demands of just raising their families. And it is abysmal that Washington policymakers in either body are having that kind of mindset.

Across the West, we see a continuing failure to give access to public lands. That's one thing that we're fighting in the Western Caucus. I would refer any of the people in this body or any of the people watching this program to go online, take a look at the Western Caucus, the Jobs Frontier—over 40 pieces of legislation that would bring on jobs, each one of them designed to bring on jobs with no government investment. That would all be private money creating private jobs. Also, there are bills which are designed to stop the government from killing 3 million more jobs this year. So the Western Caucus is hard at work trying to preserve the economy of the United States. And I appreciate you bringing that up.

Mr. GARDNER. I thank the gentleman.

The gentleman from South Carolina, again, some of our colleagues would like to see energy production increase in Saudi Arabia. They'd, I guess, stand idly by while this administration nixes, vetoes, puts a fork in the Keystone XL pipeline; yet they'd rather see those jobs go overseas. They'd rather see that energy production occur overseas instead of doing it right here in our own backyard. I'm sure our colleagues mean well, I'm sure they're well-intentioned, but I certainly hope they would produce those jobs here, produce that energy here, develop an energy policy that is with American jobs for our security.

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. If the gentleman will yield.

Mr. GARDNER. I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. You're exactly right. These are about American jobs going overseas and American tax dollars going overseas, and American-earned income. Because, as I mentioned earlier, you're digging deeper into your wallet, taking out—instead of a \$20 bill to fill up a gas tank, taking out a \$100 bill. Americans know what they could do with the rest of that money, the difference there.

I get a little passionate about this issue, and I apologize to the ladies here in the Chamber that have to record what I say, but I'm not alone in this. America is passionate about this as well because they know we have the resources here and they know we can be energy independent and we wouldn't be giving money to Middle Eastern countries, who a lot of times don't like us maybe as well as the Canadians and other countries closer to home like us.

I spouted off some things about Federal land and State land and North Dakota and Montana a minute ago, so let me just tell you: in 2000, Federal oil production accounted for 32 percent of the total U.S. energy production. In 2010, after 2 years of the job-destroying Obama administration policies that I mentioned earlier, Federal production only accounts for 19 percent of the total U.S. oil production. That's an 11 percent decrease.

When I think about the year 2000, I think about some of our friends on the other side of the building, and JOHN KERRY and some of these guys that said, you know what, if we decided to drill today and open up new lease areas and do energy exploration, whether it's the Outer Continental Shelf, it won't have any effect on the price at the pump for Americans because it takes about 10 years for that to come online and start producing oil. But, hey guys, that was 10 years ago. What impact would those policies of drilling in ANWR or off the Outer Continental Shelf or more onshore production, what impact would that have had on the price you pay at the pump today?

I think we've got to get serious about American energy exploration and pro-

duction here. The journey of 1,000 miles begins with a single step. We need to take that step today. I'll tell you, the House Republicans have done that with numerous job-creating, energy-production bills that have passed out of this Chamber that are languishing in the abyss known as the United States Senate—that's failed to pass a budget for our country in 1,036 days, that's failed to take up American energy-independence bills, job-creating bills that we passed out of this Chamber.

So energy production is down on Federal lands, and the Obama administration is taking credit for increased production and saying we've opened up new offshore areas. But the data I have says there's less offshore acreage open for energy exploration and production now than when President Obama took office when nearly 100 percent of the Outer Continental Shelf was opened up under the Bush administration. They lifted the moratorium for energy exploration, let alone production.

Listen, I served for 18 months on what was known then, under the Mineral Mining Services of the Department of the Interior, the OCS, or Outer Continental Shelf, 5-year Planning Subcommittee where we looked at the next 5-year plan for this country on what areas we were going to open up offshore. What areas were available for us to even talk about were small grid squares in the western Gulf of Mexico, nothing in the eastern Gulf of Mexico, nothing in the Atlantic Ocean, nothing off the coast of California, nothing off the coast of Alaska except for another small square.

This was prior to the latter years of the Bush administration when he decided, you know what, American energy independence means we need to open up the Outer Continental Shelf and really see what's out there and begin energy production. But the 5-year plan we looked at looked at these grid squares, and we were going to recommend a lease/sell, where we were going to offer leases to those areas, to the energy companies so they could go out there and explore and produce those resources.

Well, the Obama administration has taken a lot of that off the table. They haven't created a new 5-year plan. They're going to say they just came out with a new one, but I believe it's just all for looks.

The total onshore acreage—I was talking about offshore—but the total onshore acreage leased under the Obama administration in 2009 and 2010 is the lowest in over two decades. We're not talking about ultra-Deep Horizon accident-type offshore production.

Mr. GARDNER. Will the gentleman yield on that point?

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. I yield to the gentleman from Colorado.

Mr. GARDNER. Because, again, going back to a speech given recently by this administration, by this President, he said at the University of Miami that we have record oil produc-

tion, that he's actually leading us out of this energy crisis.

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. Energy production might be up in this country, but it has nothing to do with the policies of this administration. It goes back to the previous administration that said, you know what, we're going to open up Bakken because the geological survey found a ton of oil reserves there. In your home State, the oil shale in the Rocky Mountains, Colorado, could be the next Saudi Arabia if we were to allow onshore production for oil shale in the Rocky Mountains. I know the gentleman from Colorado probably wants to talk about the oil shales of Colorado.

Mr. GARDNER. Well, I absolutely do. In fact, not only talk about the oil shales of Colorado, but this entire country where we actually are home—the United States is home to six times Saudi Arabia's proven resources because of the potential for oil shale in this country—1.5 trillion barrels of potential oil shale. That's six times Saudi Arabia's proven resources. That's enough energy to power the United States for the next 200 years.

The gentleman talked about legislation that we have passed to try to keep jobs. You talked about some of the comments that were made that, well, that won't impact our supply until sometime over the next 10 years. Let me just tell you about one bill that we passed last summer, H.R. 2021, passed with bipartisan support.

That bill was focused on a particular project in the Beaufort and Chukchi Sea north of Alaska. In the time that it has taken one company to get a permit for that energy development—an area that's already approved for energy development by this government—it's taken 6 years to get a permit. In the time that it's taken them to try to get that permit—they still don't have it completely done, by the way—but in the time that it took them to get this far, they've drilled over 400 wells around the world, creating jobs around the world, creating energy for other people, creating jobs and resources, economic development for other people, but certainly not in the United States.

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. You're exactly right.

You know, we had a tragic accident. Nobody is running from the fact that Deepwater Horizon was very tragic in the Gulf of Mexico, and we'll learn from that. The oil companies, energy production companies will learn from that. But during that moratorium under the Obama administration—and then later he said he lifted the moratorium, but there was a de facto moratorium because they were failing to issue leases and permits for continued drilling out there.

For companies that already invested billions of dollars in purchasing the rights to those lease areas to explore for energy and produce energy, they were languishing out there, waiting on

the drilling permits to come back from Washington. The Department of Energy and the Department of the Interior were slow-walking these permits. And so at some point in time those energy companies said, you know what, we're going to drag those drilling platforms out of the Gulf of Mexico.

They towed them to the shore offshore of Brazil, to the seas offshore of Brazil and the seas offshore of Africa. Today, they are drilling for energy in other countries. And we had them here in the Gulf of Mexico producing American energy to lower the price at the pump for American consumers. It's very expensive to get those drilling platforms back to the gulf.

And so, as tragic as Horizon was, we learned from it. The Obama administration issued a moratorium to stop that drilling. Then they said, well, we're going to end the moratorium. But then when they failed to issue the leases, it's really a moratorium, it's instituting their policies. And it's going to be very difficult for us to get that production level back in the Gulf of Mexico because it's expensive for those companies to bring those rigs back.

□ 2050

Mr. GARDNER. I think as those rigs have left, as we've seen production occur elsewhere because of the roadblocks to domestic energy production, we see other countries—us becoming even more reliant on overseas energy.

Just a couple of weeks ago, Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke warned that a major disruption in foreign oil supplies that sends prices skyward could thwart the economic recovery. So the Federal Reserve Chairman has recognized that the more dependent we become on somebody else, if there's a disruption in that supply, a disruption in that overseas energy source that we're relying on, it could thwart our economic recovery.

Let me just go to a chart next.

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. Before do you that, can I just remind you that Admiral Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, along that same line, said, there can be no national security without energy security. There can be no national security without energy security. That's a wake-up call, America.

Mr. GARDNER. That's a great point on national security, because not only do we have economic objectives that we need to achieve with a national energy policy where we're relying on our own production, but we've got national security implications. And if we don't rise to the challenge, we're going to be risking our security because of our reliance on other nations.

To go to the point of energy prices, this chart just illustrates how much gas prices have increased, how high they've increased. \$1.80 over the past several years. The average price of gasoline has increased 42 cents since February of 2011. That's just on average around the country.

The important thing to recognize is the impact that gas price increases have on the American consumer, on American families. All told, each penny increase in the cost of gasoline takes about \$1 billion out of the economy. So as gas prices hit \$3.17 in February, just a few weeks ago, \$3.18, every penny was a billion dollars taken out of the American consumers' pockets, sent overseas. If a 50-cent jump in gasoline prices is sustained over the next year, \$70 billion would be lost in the U.S. economy.

This chart says it all. Go back to January of 2009. The President takes office, \$1.84. If you went and you filled up your car, \$1.84 a gallon. As of February 23, just a few days ago, just a week ago, \$3.61. Billions of dollars taken away from the American consumer, sent overseas, when we could be using that money right here to create American jobs, reducing the price at the pump.

By spring, perhaps sometime this spring, according to Barron's, gasoline may even reach \$4.50 a gallon. These aren't scare tactics. This is reality that Americans are facing each and every day when they fill up at the pump. Trying to figure out how to make ends meet, trying to make sure they're able to meet their mortgages, pay their bills, put food on the table for their family, \$60 a tank, \$70 a tank to get to work.

What trade-offs are we forcing the American consumer to make, when we have the opportunity to create American energy right here, to build the Keystone XL pipeline, to develop our Federal resources and do it in a responsible manner, do it in a way that creates jobs, giving our own communities the benefit of that exploration, of that development of the tax revenue that they generate.

\$3.61 a gallon, it's unacceptable, and yet we hear talk of increasing production in Saudi Arabia, instead of doing it here? We hear an administration that says, you know, they were against the Keystone pipeline and then they were for it and then they're for part of it. I heard the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. TERRY), who's been a leader on the XL pipeline, say that that's like a little bit like the rooster trying to take credit for the dawn.

We have an obligation to make sure we're developing our resources right here, right now. We hear others talk about tapping into the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. In fact, just a few headlines in recent days: Secretary Tim Geithner says tapping the Strategic Petroleum Reserve is an option that's on the table for the administration.

An article in Politico on February 25: House Democrat leaders are urging President Obama to open the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

Another article, that same day: Washington liberals call on President Obama to tap Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GARDNER. Absolutely.

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. I've gotten Facebook posts. I've gotten phone calls in our office encouraging just that, for the President to tap the Strategic Petroleum Reserves to help lessen the price at the pump.

But let me just tell America that it was during the 1970s oil embargo that I remember, as a small child, that Congress created this huge 727 million-barrel reserve that was intended for national security emergencies.

Before President Obama tapped the SPR, the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, back in June of 2011, the reserve had previously only been tapped once for war, the other to combat a natural disaster, and the third time, quite similarly, for political opportunism. And the examples are this:

President Bush, George Herbert Walker Bush, the first Bush, used the SPR, the Strategic Petroleum Reserves, during Operation Desert Storm because we were going to war over there and he was afraid that would disrupt Middle Eastern supplies, and so he tapped those reserves just to make sure Americans didn't suffer because of our actions over there in Operation Desert Storm.

And then in 2005 we had, down along the gulf coast, which is a tremendous energy production area, in Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, we had a little thing called Hurricane Katrina that came through and really disrupted supplies in the Gulf States and did a lot of damage there. And President George W. Bush opened up the strategic reserves to lessen the price at the pump for Americans because we knew there was going to be some supply disruptions.

So we had a natural disaster, and we had a war.

But then in 2000, just another example, President Clinton opened up the supply under the Strategic Petroleum Reserve right before a campaign, right before the Bush-Gore campaign. There wasn't any natural disaster. There wasn't a hurricane bearing down on us. We were not going to war. He was trying to stabilize the market to help him in a political game.

And then we see President Obama, in June of 2011, do the same thing. Instead of focusing on American jobs and American energy production and a long-term energy policy, they're playing games with tapping the strategic reserves which have an intended purpose, and that intended purpose is not to bring the price down at the pump. It's to stabilize the American economy in case of war or in case of a natural disaster.

Now, we've got these reserves sitting there, and we've got a lot of middle eastern unrest with what's going on in Iran and Iran cutting England and Germany or England and France, one of the European countries, off from any oil. It's actually a reverse embargo, where Iran's not going to ship oil to some friendly countries in Europe. And

so we're seeing this volatility due to the unrest in Iran.

Shouldn't we, as America, keep that oil in reserve just in case there's a problem over there? Maybe—who knows, maybe there's further disruptions, Strait of Hormuz issue. Strategic reserves are there for a stated purpose, not for political gains.

Mr. GARDNER. I would just make the point that if this administration acknowledges that by tapping into the Strategic Petroleum Reserve they can increase supplies and, therefore, have an impact on price, isn't it obvious what we ought to be doing as the policy of this country?

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. That's too much common sense.

Mr. GARDNER. If supply is the answer, tapping into the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, we should increase domestic production. We should increase opportunities in the Western United States, on our Outer Continental Shelf. We should utilize the energy that our neighbors to the north are willing to help us out with through the Keystone XL pipeline. Because if the Strategic Petroleum Reserve is, indeed, about supply, the political fix to a supply problem—

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. A Band-Aid, so to speak.

Mr. GARDNER. Why isn't this administration willing to actually do the right thing, do what's necessary to keep our economy afloat, to keep it from running on fumes and make sure that we can produce that energy in our own backyard, increase our opportunities to produce domestic energy?

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. The gentleman from Colorado has been a stalwart and a leader in energy, American energy independence, as a leader of the House Energy Action Team. We call it HEAT, H-E-A-T.

Let me just tell America, if you want to find out some of these details, some of the facts that we've laid out for you in black and white, you can go to the Web site for House Energy Action

Team, under the House GOP Web site, and find this data out. We're putting it out there for you. We're not shying away from it. We're not. We're providing this information for you Americans to make informed decisions to understand that these energy bills we pass through the House, they have merit and they would have results if we could get the Senate to take them up, and let's have a true comprehensive energy policy for this country that focuses on American energy independence, that does things right for you Americans to lessen the price that you're paying at the pump, to lessen the price that you're paying on your electricity bill every month.

House Energy Action Team is focused on this. The gentleman from Colorado is a leader on that. Our caucus and our conference is a leader on that.

□ 2100

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from South Carolina for his leadership, and this is the third time that we've done that this year already, come down and talk as a group about what we can do to get our energy prices down to relieve the pain at the pump, to make sure that we're restoring our energy independence. So we'll continue this effort.

Last week, I had the opportunity to visit the western slope of Colorado. The vast majority of the land there is owned by the Federal Government. They've seen rigs being sent away, shutdowns, and opportunities, though, of great success where there is a glimmer of hope for increasing development in the western slope of Colorado.

In my district on the eastern plains of Colorado, one county has drilled over 2,100 wells just last year, putting thousands of their people to work, helping create economic opportunity, creating jobs, bringing opportunities to the county that they never would have had otherwise.

So when I talk to people of western Colorado, eastern Colorado, they sim-

ply want to do what they do best. That's to run their businesses, to do it in a responsible manner, to do what's right for their children and their grandchildren, and to stop sending the hundreds and hundreds of billions of dollars that we send each and every year overseas to get energy from them instead of using that money right here on our own families. Every year we send \$331 billion to foreign nations. We can start using that money in our own backyard.

The House Energy Action Team is committed to leading this country to a future of economic growth, economic opportunity, energy security, and energy independence.

I thank my colleagues from South Carolina and New Mexico for joining me tonight.

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. NADLER (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the speaker:

H.R. 347. An act to correct and simplify the drafting of section 1752 (relating to restricted buildings or grounds) of title 18, United States Code.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 2 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, March 1, 2012, at 9 a.m.

EXPENDITURE REPORTS CONCERNING OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL

Reports concerning the foreign currencies and U.S. dollars utilized for Official Foreign Travel during the first quarter of 2012 pursuant to Public Law 95-384 are as follows:

REPORT OF EXPENDITURES FOR OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL, DELEGATION TO BRAZIL, COLOMBIA, AND MEXICO, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, EXPENDED BETWEEN JAN. 8 AND JAN. 15, 2012

Name of Member or employee	Date		Country	Per diem ¹		Transportation		Other purposes		Total	
	Arrival	Departure		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ²	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ²	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ²	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ²
Hon. John Boehner	1/8	1/10	Brazil		904.00		(3)				904.00
Hon. Dan Boren	1/8	1/10	Brazil		904.00		(3)				904.00
Hon. Greg Walden	1/8	1/10	Brazil		904.00		(3)				904.00
Hon. Dave Camp	1/8	1/10	Brazil		904.00		(3)				904.00
Hon. Doc Hastings	1/8	1/10	Brazil		904.00		(3)				904.00
Hon. John Kline	1/8	1/10	Brazil		904.00		(3)				904.00
Hon. Devin Nunes	1/8	1/10	Brazil		904.00		(3)				904.00
Barry Jackson	1/8	1/10	Brazil		904.00		(3)				904.00
Dave Schnitzger	1/8	1/10	Brazil		904.00		(3)				904.00
Jennifer Stewart	1/8	1/10	Brazil		904.00		(3)				904.00
Janice Robinson	1/8	1/10	Brazil		904.00		(3)				904.00
Hon. John Boehner	1/10	1/13	Colombia		1,095.00		(3)				1,095.00
Hon. Dan Boren	1/10	1/13	Colombia		1,095.00		(3)				1,095.00
Hon. Greg Walden	1/10	1/13	Colombia		1,095.00		(3)				1,095.00
Hon. Dave Camp	1/10	1/13	Colombia		1,095.00		(3)				1,095.00