

KEEP OUR NATION SAFE

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

Mr. ROONEY. Madam Speaker, keeping our Nation safe is our most important responsibility under the Constitution as Members of Congress.

When we talk about sequestration, we're really asking are we really going to shirk that responsibility, are we really going to cut national defense and force our country to grow weaker and weaker over the next 10 years. If we don't prevent these massive cuts, we'll be left with our smallest ground forces since 1940, fewest ships since 1915, and our smallest Air Force in our history.

Our Secretary of Defense says these cuts would be devastating and would seriously damage readiness. Does anything else we really do here matter if we knowingly let our defenses down, if we aren't ready to be able to defend ourselves?

If there's wasteful spending in the Pentagon budget that we could cut without impacting national security, then we should do so. I led the fight to kill the extra engine for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program, saving taxpayers billions of dollars. The White House doesn't dispute the impact of these cuts, but won't put forward an alternative. The Majority Leader of the Senate won't schedule a vote on the House bill, but won't introduce a plan either. We have to do something to avoid these massive cuts to keep our country safe.

DISENFRANCHISING VOTERS

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

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Speaker, State legislatures all across the country are passing photo ID laws that could strip millions of Americans of their right to vote. Students, communities of color, low-income individuals, and seniors are particularly at risk of being disenfranchised.

As just one example, in March this year, a World War II veteran in Tennessee was denied the right to vote because he did not have an ID that matched his assisted living address. In Minnesota, which is considering a misguided constitutional amendment on photo ID, 215,000 registered voters don't have a driver's license or ID card with a current address on it; and if it passes, it will disenfranchise all of them.

Why put these hundreds of thousands of voters at risk? Proponents claim fraud, but there's not any fraud. Voter fraud is already illegal, and the number of confirmed cases is insignificant statistically. There are only a tiny number of cases. For this, we're going to disenfranchise literally millions of people?

CANCER FREE LABEL ACT

(Mr. DEUTCH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mr. DEUTCH. Madam Speaker, we all know that wearing sunscreen, quitting smoking, or steering clear of asbestos can reduce our cancer risk. Yet, carcinogens are all around us, and exposure to these cancer-causing agents can be found in everyday products and in the food we eat.

For the most part, consumers are kept in the dark with no way to know for sure whether the makeup they use or the food they eat contains known carcinogens. It's time to help consumers choose safer products for themselves and for their loved ones. That's why today I'm introducing the Cancer Free Label Act. My bill will give companies the chance to market to consumers the fact that the products that they make are free of carcinogens.

Just as consumers refused to buy baby products laden with BPA and nearly wiped this chemical from the shelves, the Cancer Free Label Act will use market-driven forces to drive change. By passing the Cancer Free Label Act, we can give families across America the opportunity to avoid cancer-causing agents. And by promoting healthier choices, we will even be able to save lives.

DOMESTIC TERRORISM

(Mr. MORAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MORAN. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the moment of silence that we extended the victims of the Aurora, Colorado, massacre yesterday. But the more telling silence is this body's refusal to address the issue of gun control. As a result, a comparable number of Americans will be killed by firearms every day. There are 10,000 homicides by firearms in America every year, 19 times the number of firearm deaths in all civilized countries combined.

Today is the anniversary of the shooting deaths of two of our Capitol policemen. We responded to those killings with remorse and even more heartfelt condolences after our colleague Gabby was shot, but 60 more multiple murders have been committed since then.

Thirty-two innocent students at Virginia Tech were massacred, and Virginia's legislative body actually weakened the State's gun control laws, suggesting that the fault was with the students because they weren't carrying firearms themselves. A similar comment was made by a Member of this body after the Aurora killings that there should have been a shootout in that darkened theater.

This is domestic terrorism, Madam Speaker. We ought to stop being so soft on such crime. If this shooting had

been committed by foreign terrorists, we'd send the marines out after them, but foreign terrorists don't buy their weapons from dealers who are members of the NRA.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would like to remind all persons in the gallery that they are here as guests of the House and that any manifestation of approval or disapproval of proceedings is in violation of the rules of the House.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on the motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any recorded vote on the postponed question will be taken later.

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S PROPOSED 2012-2017 OFFSHORE DRILLING LEASE SALE PLAN ACT

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6168) to direct the Secretary of the Interior to implement the Proposed Final Outer Continental Shelf Oil & Gas Leasing Program (2012-2017) in accordance with the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act and other applicable law.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6168

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "President Obama's Proposed 2012-2017 Offshore Drilling Lease Sale Plan Act".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) OCS PLANNING AREA.—Any reference to an "OCS Planning Area" means such Outer Continental Shelf Planning Area as specified by the Department of the Interior as of January 1, 2012.

(2) PROPOSED OIL AND GAS LEASING PROGRAM (2012-2017).—The term "Proposed Final Outer Continental Shelf Oil & Gas Leasing Program (2012-2017)" means such plan as transmitted to the Speaker of the House and President of the Senate on June 28, 2012.

SEC. 3. REQUIREMENT TO IMPLEMENT PROPOSED OIL AND GAS LEASING PROGRAM (2012-2017).

The Secretary of the Interior shall implement the Proposed Final Outer Continental Shelf Oil & Gas Leasing Program (2012-2017) in accordance with the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1331 et seq.), other applicable law, and the schedule established by such proposed program for conducting oil and gas lease sales in OCS Planning Areas in specified years as set forth in the following table:

Proposed Final Pro- gram for 2012– 2017 Lease Sale Schedule Sale No.	Area	Year
229	Western Gulf of Mexico	2012
227	Central Gulf of Mexico	2013
233	Western Gulf of Mexico	2013
225	Eastern Gulf of Mexico	2014
231	Central Gulf of Mexico	2014
238	Western Gulf of Mexico	2014
235	Central Gulf of Mexico	2015
246	Western Gulf of Mexico	2015
226	Eastern Gulf of Mexico	2016
241	Central Gulf of Mexico	2016
237	Chukchi Sea	2016
248	Western Gulf of Mexico	2016
244	Cook Inlet	2016
247	Central Gulf of Mexico	2017
242	Beaufort Sea	2017

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) and the gentlewoman from Massachusetts (Ms. TSONGAS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Washington?

There was no objection.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The bill we are now considering, H.R. 6168, is a very simple bill. It would implement President Obama's proposed offshore drilling lease plan for the years 2012 to 2017.

Late yesterday, the House debated H.R. 6082, the Congressional Replacement of President Obama's Energy Restricting and Job-Limiting Offshore Drilling Plan. These bills contain two distinctly different offshore drilling plans, and the House will have an opportunity to choose which one allows for more American energy production and more American job creation, and which one continues to lock up America's resources.

This debate is occurring during the 60-day mandatory review period provided for under section 18 of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, which requires a President to submit his proposed plan to Congress for review. He must submit it to Congress before it can take effect. This 60-day clock started ticking on June 28 when President Obama's plan was submitted to the House and to the Senate.

Madam Speaker, I am the official sponsor of this bill to implement President Obama's plan. I introduced this bill with the specific purpose of allowing the people's House to officially go on record as either endorsing the President's plan or registering its opposition to it.

□ 1240

Now, while I'm the bill's sponsor, I am going to vote against this bill. I op-

pose the President's plan. It's a giant step backwards for American energy production and for job creation.

Madam Speaker, President Obama likes to give speeches claiming support for offshore drilling; however, I have observed his actions while in office are 180 degrees different than his rhetoric.

When President Obama was sworn into office in January 2009, nearly all of our offshore areas were newly open to American energy production. This was the result of the public outrage in the summer of 2008 over \$4 gasoline prices that resulted in the Federal Government lifting the two moratoria that blocked energy production off both the Atlantic and the Pacific coasts. The will of the American people was clear: For the sake of family budgets, for small businesses, and for our economy, we must produce more American energy in America to lessen our dependence on hostile foreign sources.

So when President Obama took office, there was an offshore energy plan to conduct lease sales in new areas that were no longer under the moratoria. Instead of seizing this opportunity to vastly increase American energy production, the President tossed that plan aside and delayed and canceled these sales, including a sale scheduled for 2011 that would open a section offshore of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The Obama administration has spent the last 3½ years slowly writing a plan that takes our country backwards, a plan that effectively reimposes the drilling moratoria that were lifted in 2008. The President's proposed plan keeps 85 percent of our offshore areas off-limits to energy production. The Atlantic coast, the Pacific coast, and parts of the Arctic are all kept under lock and key under his plan.

His plan absolutely opens no new areas for drilling. As an example, after delaying the Virginia lease sale in 2011, the President doesn't even include it in his proposed plan. Under President Obama, then, the absolute earliest that the Virginia lease sale could happen is 2017. That's 6 years after it was scheduled to take place.

In total, the President's proposed plan only includes 15 lease sales. According to the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service, this means that this President has the distinction of offering the lowest number of lease sales over a 5-year plan since this program began, since this legislation establishing the review. Madam Speaker, that's worse than even Jimmy Carter's record.

During the several hours of debate yesterday, there was little defense of the President's limited and weak offshore plan. In fact, a great deal of time was expended by the other side trying to change the subject, rather than endorse or defend the President's offshore plan. I think that shows just how out of touch and unacceptable this plan really is.

Today we will hear the deliberately misleading claim that the President's

proposed plan opens 75 percent of the known offshore resources. That is simply not true, Madam Speaker. It was meant to provide political cover for a failed record on offshore drilling. The cold hard facts are the President is effectively reimposing a moratorium on 85 percent of our potential resources offshore of America's coasts.

An attempt might be made to claim that the bill doesn't represent the President's plan. Madam Speaker, it couldn't be more black-and-white. This bill exactly replicates the offshore lease sales scheduled in the President's proposed plan, both by location and by the sale year. H.R. 6168 is the President's plan.

Now, just last week, Secretary of the Interior Salazar wrote that President Obama's offshore plan is what the "American people have asked for." In reality, the American people want increased American energy production and new and more American jobs. The President's proposed plan fails to deliver on both, American energy production and American jobs.

So by voting against this bill—which I will do, even though I am the sponsor of it—Members of Congress can stand up for the American people and reject the President's no-new-drilling, no-new-jobs plan.

We can and we must do better. And that is precisely why we had the debate, and we will have a vote later on today on H.R. 6082, the House plan.

So with that, Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. TSONGAS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would like to thank our ranking member, Mr. MARKEY of Massachusetts, for his forceful advocacy on this issue.

I rise today in strong support of H.R. 6168, legislation that would support the President's proposed Offshore Drilling Lease Sale Plan for 2012–2017. This plan, which has been developed over the past few years with extensive public input, is a responsible way to increase domestic production of oil and gas while still protecting our delicate and vital ocean environment.

Contrary to Republican claims that the plan would restrict domestic production and hurt jobs, the President's proposed plan would actually open 75 percent of offshore oil and gas resources to development. Where there are resources, the land is being opened—75 percent. In fact, domestic production of oil is at an 18-year high, and gas production is at an all-time high under President Obama.

At the same time that the President's plan includes new leasing, it also protects many of our most important ocean environments from drilling, such as Georges Bank and other vital fishing areas off the coast of my State, Massachusetts. Georges Bank is a valuable public resource that has been central to our region's rich cultural heritage, economy, and identity.

For years, these waters have been at the heart of the New England fishing industry and have historically been one of the country's most productive fishing grounds. Income from Massachusetts fisheries has been valued at approximately \$350 million annually, and Georges Bank is a key part of this marine ecosystem. Allowing oil and gas drilling on Georges Bank would threaten to destroy these rich fishing grounds and could have a devastating effect on the Massachusetts economy.

But the benefits of the President's responsible plan go well beyond just protecting Massachusetts. This plan would also protect Bristol Bay in Alaska from drilling. Bristol Bay, as many know, is one of Alaska's most pristine fishing grounds and the source of much of the salmon that we consume here in the United States.

The decision to keep these areas off-limits was based on local recommendations and a lack of infrastructure and oil spill preparedness. If we open this fishing ground to oil drilling, the impact could be felt across our country.

The Republican plan would also require just one environmental review for every new lease offered in the Atlantic, Pacific, or Bristol Bay, without taking into account the uniqueness of each of these locations. While I certainly understand the desire to streamline these reviews, requiring one blanket review for the entire country is not the answer.

The harsh climate of Alaska is infinitely different than that of the Gulf of Mexico or the Gulf of Maine. It is important to know the conditions of each site before drilling is started or we could face another disaster like the 2010 BP Deepwater Horizon spill from which the Gulf Coast States are still recovering.

So I call upon my colleagues to support the President's responsible offshore leasing plan and vote in favor of H.R. 6168. Our support of the President's plan is support for the fishermen in Massachusetts and throughout the United States.

I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1250

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN), a member of the Natural Resources Committee and a subcommittee chairman.

Mr. LAMBORN. Madam Speaker, this bill we are considering under suspension simply codifies President Obama's offshore drilling plan for the next 5 years. It's a simple bill and a simple vote: What do you choose for America's future?

The Congressional Replacement Plan we debated yesterday will harness America's vast offshore resources in both existing and new areas in a responsible way. Our plan is the right plan to keep the United States competitive and to develop the resources that American families and American

businesses need. It will generate more revenue for the taxpayers, more energy, and more jobs.

What does the Obama plan under this suspension vote have to offer? No new areas for energy development and the lowest number of lease sales in the history of the 5-year program, according to Congressional Research Service. Is that really the plan you think is best to move our Nation forward and generate high-paying jobs?

Look at this bar graph. This shows what was going on under President Jimmy Carter 30 years ago. This 5-year plan program has been going for more than 30 years, and the 15 lease sales you see at the end of the graph is the lowest in the history of the 5-year program. If you remember, during Jimmy Carter's administration, we had gasoline shortages. You could go to the gas station and buy gas if your license plate ended in an odd or even number, depending on the day of the week. We should not have the lowest number of lease sales in the history of our country.

The Obama 5-year plan is the you-cannot-build-it plan; you cannot build new infrastructure for energy. It tells the people of Virginia that they cannot build new rigs and explore new areas of the Outer Continental Shelf regardless of the bipartisan support of the Governor, Senators, and Representatives of Virginia. The President's plan says you cannot build anything new, essentially reinstating a moratorium on the Pacific and Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf. The President's plan locks up 85 percent of our Nation's nearly 2 billion acres of Outer Continental Shelf resources.

Production on Federal lands, according to the Energy Information Administration, is down under the Obama administration.

I heard something earlier about natural gas production is up. That's on private lands primarily because of fracking.

We need to get Federal lands producing again, and the Obama 5-year plan is not the plan to do that. The Congressional Replacement Plan is. We should vote for more American energy and vote for more American jobs. So vote against this suspension bill and vote in favor of the Congressional Replacement Plan.

Ms. TSONGAS. Madam Speaker, the number of lease sales don't translate into more drilling on these leases necessarily. Oil companies already hold leases in the Gulf of Mexico that are sitting idle that contain nearly 18 billion barrels of oil, according to the Interior Department. Oil companies should begin drilling on those leases before asking to threaten Massachusetts and other coastal States with new drilling.

Now I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN).

Mr. MORAN. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague from Massachusetts.

Madam Speaker, I support President Obama's proposed offshore drilling lease plan. I will vote for it, but I suspect that it will garner little support, and that's the reason why it was scheduled for consideration today. But unlike the Republican majority in the House who favor drilling above all else, Interior Secretary Salazar and President Obama are acting more responsibly in a balanced fashion.

Their 5-year leasing plan attempts to balance the full range of public and private interests. Their 5-year leasing plan attempts to ensure that our coastal waters will continue to be a shared public resource. They were never meant to be the exclusive domain of the oil and gas industry.

Introducing drilling in new areas, as the gentleman from Washington State's bill would do, will disrupt established industries like commercial fishing and beach tourism. There is no question about that. And there is no need to rush forward and open our entire coast to drilling when 75 percent of our offshore oil and gas resources are already available for drilling. In fact, more oil is in production today under the Obama administration than at any time during the last 14 years. And more of the public's lands and waters have been leased for drilling today than at any previous time in American history.

Onshore, oil companies hold leases on more than 73 million acres of the public's land, though they choose to keep 45 million of those acres inactive.

Offshore, more than 37 million acres of the Outer Continental Shelf have been offered for lease, although the oil industry has bid on less than 10 percent of these new available leases. As of June 1 of this year, there were 1,980 rotary drilling rigs operating on U.S. lands and waters, more than all other countries combined.

Now, the President's plan does open up areas in the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas off Alaska's northern coast to oil and gas development. I do have strong misgivings that adequate safeguards have been established to respond to a future oil spill disaster in these seas because drilling will be done in a harsh environment in a remote area where disaster response capabilities are extremely limited and could be compromised by severe weather conditions, which in fact are the norm up there.

But I am in strong agreement that the 2012-2017 plan excludes lease sale 220 that covers waters in the Mid-Atlantic, especially off the coast of Virginia. In addition to commercial fishing interests and tourism, lease sale 220 threatens military readiness, our national security interests, and it intersects shipping lanes for the Atlantic's two busiest commercial ports—Hampden Roads and Baltimore. The U.S. Atlantic fleet is based at the Norfolk Naval Base and operates in these very same waters that the President wants to protect. He wisely proposes simply postponing oil and gas development primarily for that purpose.

According to a report issued by the Office of the Deputy Secretary of Defense for Readiness, there should be no lease sales in 72 percent of the proposed 220 lease area since it is in conflict with live ordnance, air surface missile/bomb and gunnery exercises, shipboard qualification trials, carrier qualifications, and follow-on testing and evaluation. An additional 5 percent would interfere with aerial operations and shouldn't host permanent surface structures.

In summary, 78 percent of proposed lease sale 220 that the President wisely postpones would be in areas that conflict with our national security needs; and a good deal of the remaining 22 percent would be within the shipping lanes to the ports of Hampton Roads and Baltimore.

Madam Speaker, our coastal waters are a shared resource that host a number of competing and sometimes incompatible uses. In the interest of the oil and gas industry, and to perpetuate a myth that somehow we can drill our way to lower gasoline prices and energy independence, the Republican majority is demonstrating a disregard for our other economic interests and the livelihood of millions of Americans employed in the fishing and tourism and national security sectors. Their livelihood is needlessly placed at risk in a drilling-above-all-else policy.

So I encourage my colleagues to support the President's balanced legislation and reject the other drilling bill that is on the floor today. The President is trying to do the right thing, and he should be supported. The other bill will have unintended, unforeseen, but inevitably adverse consequences to our economy.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. LANDRY), a Representative of a coastal State and a very important member of the Natural Resources Committee.

Mr. LANDRY. Madam Speaker, the rhetoric here just does not meet the facts. Our energy policy in this country has continued to fail us because we have spent money in areas that are getting us no results. We know that to lower costs for all Americans, we must lower their energy bills. We know that the cheapest form of energy out there is oil and gas; and yet the President puts out a bare-bones policy, yet claims to want to create jobs.

The lowest unemployment rate in this country exists in North Dakota, and the reason that unemployment is so low there is because they understand that drilling equals jobs. Now, let's see what's going on up in the Dakotas, because if we would believe what the gentlemen and ladies across the aisle would lead us to believe, that the areas that we would like to open up do not contain any resources, then they would believe, as the USGS believed in 2002, that the Marcellus shale in the Pennsylvania area only contained about 2 trillion cubic feet of gas.

□ 1300

Well, today, through the hard work of Americans and private industry, we have realized that there are 84 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. In the Gulf of Mexico in the 1980s, there was an assessment that believed that only 6.25 billion barrels of oil was located in the gulf, but yet today, 15.5 billion barrels have been produced.

Now, the problem is that it takes a while for private industry to recognize where these resources are, to be able to find them, to explore for them and then to determine how much is in the ground. And so that takes time. So what the President does is he takes those properties, those Federal lands, those Federal properties, off the table. It doesn't allow those companies to go out and explore to determine whether or not we can actually be energy independent, which everyone here on both sides of the aisle continues to come up to these microphones and claim they want.

Well, we can do that. And all we're asking in our plan is that we allow these properties to be surveyed and looked at and be made available.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. I yield the gentleman an additional 2 minutes.

Mr. LANDRY. Make these properties available so that private industry can come in to determine the amount of reserves that can be extracted out of the ground and given to Americans to reduce their overall energy consumption.

So, Madam Speaker, I will tell you that what the President does is fails the American people when it comes to creating jobs and lowering the cost of energy not only at the gas pump, but in their electric bills, in the manufacturing centers around this country and in the steel mills. In every sector of this country that uses energy, the failure for us to tap into our resources and to review and get a solid assessment on the amount of resources available to the American people is being missed here.

So I certainly hope that Members would reject the President's plan and take up our plan, which is going to expand the amount of Federal properties available to explore for oil and gas and lower the cost and create jobs for all Americans.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Massachusetts will control the time.

There was no objection.

Mr. MARKEY. Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, yesterday, the majority brought to the floor a bill that would replace the Interior Department's 5-year offshore drilling plan. Today, the majority is bringing a bill to the floor that would require the Interior Department to conduct the offshore drilling plan it is already doing.

Now why would we be taking up a bill to replace the plan yesterday and a bill

to implement the plan today? Is it because the majority is having buyer's remorse about their own bill that would put drilling rigs off of the beaches of California, the beaches of Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia? Are they having remorse putting all those rigs out there off the beaches with no new safety procedures adopted post the BP spill? Overnight, have they had some regret, conscience stricken, perhaps that's not a good idea?

That would be a very hopeful sign, I think, for all of us who care about the environment, care about safety and care about protecting the beaches and the fishing industries of our country.

Or is it because they were so compelled by arguments that the Democrats made during the debate on the floor yesterday that they now intend to reverse their position and actually support President Obama's offshore drilling plan that makes 75 percent of all of our oil and gas resources available for drilling while protecting the east and west coasts?

I don't think so, because I am quite certain that the chairman of the committee intends to vote against his own bill here today and that the only reason the majority is bringing this bill up is to defeat it. It appears that the majority's dislike of President Obama is so great and so overwhelming that they are about to actually vote against more oil and gas drilling offshore even in an era where President Obama has already demonstrated his commitment to drilling. There are more rigs out drilling now in the United States than all the rest of the world combined. We're at an 18-year high in production of oil in the United States. You have to go all the way back to 1993 to find a day where there was more oil being produced on a daily basis than today. We have reduced our oil dependence—that is, how much we have to import from overseas—from 57 percent when George Bush was President just 4 years ago down to only 45 percent during the Obama administration.

Thank you, President Obama. Thank you for the fantastic job you're doing in reducing our dependency upon imported oil. That is something that did not happen during President Bush's years in office. And that's quite a record, isn't it, that we're at an 18-year high for oil development? We're at a point where we've reduced our dependence on imported oil from 57 percent down to 45 percent just in 3½ years since President Obama was sworn in. We have more rigs than the whole rest of the world combined drilling for oil here in the United States. That is quite a record, and we thank you, President Obama, for your excellent job.

But we know what the Republican majority is trying to do here today. They're trying to re-message here that somehow or other President Obama hasn't done a historically good job. The majority is about to make their own

history here—rewrite history. They are so bent on voting against President Obama that they are going to actually oppose policy they hold most dear—more drilling. We appear to have found the one thing that can stop the majority from voting for drilling over and over again. This would be like Red Sox fans rooting against the Red Sox just because they signed Derek Jeter. All of a sudden, they would want to not support them any longer. And the majority is putting this bill on the suspension calendar today even though we know they have no intention of supporting it.

So why are we here? Why are we wasting the time of this House when there are so many other pressing issues facing the Nation? We should be focusing on creating jobs for our constituents, on passing a farm bill that helps farmers who are being harmed by drought and taking action on a spending and tax plan to avert going off the fiscal cliff of sequestration. But are we doing any of those things? No, we are not.

The majority is not only asking us to suspend the rules to pass this bill, they are asking us to suspend reality. They are asking us to suspend the reality that President Obama has reduced our dependence on oil from 57 percent down to 45 percent, that we are at an 18-year high in oil production in our country, and that we have 50 percent more floating drilling rigs operating in the Gulf of Mexico than we did before the BP spill.

Let me say that again: There are 50 percent more floating drilling rigs operating in the Gulf of Mexico than before the BP spill, and we have more drilling going on than the whole rest of the world combined. The reality is that President Obama is about “all of the above.” That’s his energy plan.

What the Republicans do is they just keep bringing out things that really make the oil industry happy but towards the goal of killing the wind industry and killing the solar industry, because they’re doing nothing for those industries. And that agenda is, oh, so clear. It’s transparently clear what this agenda is.

□ 1310

We actually support an “aye” vote on the President’s plan and a “no” vote on the Republican plan. We should not be drilling off of the beaches of our country when 75 percent of all the oil and gas resources have been made available and the oil industry hasn’t even begun in a significant way to capture all those opportunities.

At this point, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 1 additional minute to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. LANDRY).

Mr. LANDRY. Madam Speaker, I just wanted to take a moment to discuss with my good friend from Massachusetts some of the statistics that he was

laying out for the American people here on the floor.

The problem is that we are lacking the demand for energy right now because people are out of work. Because of high unemployment, people are not driving back and forth. That means they’re not utilizing gasoline or energy. So, he’s right; the amount of oil that we’re having to import today has been reduced because people are out of work.

Now, what happens if—and this is a big “if”—we can crank this economy back up and we can do what everyone here wants to do, and that is to create jobs? Well, the problem is that, if we start cranking this economy up and we don’t have a solid energy policy in place, gasoline prices are going to rise and we’re going to end up back in a recession.

So I would like the gentleman from Massachusetts to join me in saying, You know what? We’re going to put the country on a sustainable path. We’re going to ensure that when Americans get the jobs that we’re going to help create here, we’re going to make sure that the economy can continue.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. LANDRY. We’re going to ensure that that economic expansion is going to last a long, long time.

So again, I would urge the gentleman to reject the President’s plan. Join us. Give private industry an opportunity to see what is out there. Once and for all, remove the shackles that America has chained to OPEC and let us be truly energy independent.

Mr. MARKEY. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

All you have to know about the political nature of this bill—and the next bill that we’re going to be voting on that allows for drilling off of the beaches of Massachusetts and southern California and Maine and Maryland, New Jersey, without new safety safeguards being put in place—is that they kind of pick a whole bunch of States that are on the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, but they leave out one State.

Now, why did they leave out that State? I wonder why they left out Florida. Why isn’t Florida on the list? Why did they exclude that one State out of their systematic goal of increasing energy independence and compromising, if necessary, the beaches of all of these other States in the advancement of that goal to help Exxon Mobile and BP and Shell drill off of our coastline? Why don’t they want to drill off of Miami Beach? Why don’t they want to drill off of Jacksonville’s beaches? Why don’t they include Florida? Hmm. Ah, Gore v. Bush. Florida could decide the Presidential race. Ah. Oh, the Republican convention is in Florida this year? Oh. They don’t want 1 million people coming to protest the drilling

off of the beaches of Florida? Oh. That makes a lot of sense. That’s a good justification for excluding Florida, but not Massachusetts, not Maine, not Maryland, not Virginia. But Florida, they’re out.

So all you have to know about the blatant political nature of these bills is that they’re intended to embarrass President Obama, just as he has proven he is a historically successful President in increasing oil production in America. He has reduced oil dependence on overseas sources from 57 percent down to 45 percent—something George Bush never did. In fact, it spiked to 57 percent under his watch over 8 years. That’s a long time to get something done on that front—and he now has 50 percent more rigs in the Gulf of Mexico. So this is really all about politics: 131 votes out here to help the oil and gas industry, no votes out here to help the wind and solar industry.

And the story line continues, even up to the point where they exclude Florida. I mean, it’s so nakedly obvious what is happening here in terms of the political nature of what the Republicans are doing on this subject. But please, for the sake of the country, can we get to an all-of-the-above strategy? Can we get to something that actually has you saying positively what you’re going to do about the renewable energy that we have in our country that can make it possible for us to say to OPEC, totally, that we don’t need your oil any more than we need your sand? Can we actually say that? Can we agree upon that, that it’s a common goal and we can find a way of giving the incentives to the wind and solar industry in the same way you do, over and over again, want to give to the oil and gas industry?

Please, let’s work together, as a common goal, as a country, to accomplish that goal. Let’s not just favor oil and gas. Let’s have an agenda that includes all of the above. Because today is just another repetition of the same syndrome that has an ancestor worship at the altar of oil and gas that plagued us in the 20th century but can be alleviated, if we put together a plan to exploit all of our domestic resources, in the 21st century. The agenda of the majority is sadly lacking in that area.

I urge an “aye” vote on this suspension vote.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

First of all, I want to tell my good friend from Massachusetts that I was hoping he would thank me for introducing the bill because now he has an opportunity to vote for the President’s plan. I already mentioned that I was going to vote against it. I was very forthright. But now the gentleman does have an opportunity to vote for the President’s plan, so I wish that he had thanked me for that.

But I want to say this, Madam Speaker: We already know that Americans want to be less dependent on foreign energy. The Republican plan obviously does that. Americans also want to have parts of the economy start growing. Energy production is a way to jump-start our economy with good American jobs. So those are all givens.

But the rhetoric sometimes coming from the other side is: Why are some areas emphasized and some areas are not? Because we use a very, very novel approach to where we should sell leases and explore for oil, and that is, very simply, where we think the resources are, and then people will bid on that and take a chance and see if there are resources. If there are, they will drill, and the Federal Treasury and the American people benefit.

A good case of that, by the way, Madam Speaker, is in southern California, because reference has been made several times to southern California, and specifically to Santa Barbara, California, the Santa Barbara Channel.

Now, the State Lands Commission says that there are 1,200 natural occurring seeps in the Santa Barbara Channel, and it's estimated that coming out of these naturally occurring seeps in the Santa Barbara Channel is 55,000 barrels a year—each year. Experts have concluded that that amount of seep could be translated into enough fuel to fuel the energy for Santa Barbara County for 7½ years. Now, that is a lot of oil.

We believe the opportunity ought to be to go—again, with the novel approach—where the oil is. So that's why our approach says, okay, let's open up all these areas. Let's allow the private sector to ascertain if they want to pay somebody for a lease to develop those resources.

□ 1320

That is in essence what this debate is about.

And finally, let me conclude this way, Mr. Speaker. The fact is that the President's plan reinstates the moratorium that existed going up to 2008. The American people demanded that be lifted with \$4 gasoline, but this essentially reinstates that.

I think that's the wrong policy. So we'll have an opportunity today to vote on two proposals: one that does increase American energy and creates American jobs, or one that maintains the status quo. In fact, it doesn't even do that. It goes back and reestablishes the moratorium and locks up 85 percent of our resources.

So I urge a "no" vote on this suspension bill, and a "yes" vote on the subsequent bill that we debated yesterday, H.R. 6082.

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, I voted for H.R. 6168, President Obama's Proposed 2012–2017 Offshore Drilling Lease Sale Plan Act. I emphasize that this is a qualified

support. The President's plan maintains important protections for the Pacific Coast, the Atlantic Coast, and Bristol Bay. It is far better than the Republican alternative, which would open most of the American coastline to drilling, and which would eliminate important environmental safeguards in the process.

Should Congress move forward with the President's proposal, it should do so with care, ensuring sufficient protection throughout the process. In particular, I am concerned about the potential permitting in Alaska. The President's proposal does require additional research and comprehensive analysis before approval of any project in Alaska. I underscore the need to have a full understanding of the impacts of drilling on the Alaskan ecosystems before moving forward. Appropriate safeguards must be in place and I look forward to working with the administration to ensure that we move forward with projects only after being confident that they do not pose a threat to the environment, ecosystems, or existing local economies in the area.

Our biggest priority should be reducing our dependence on fossil fuels, regardless of whether or not those fuels are obtained domestically or internationally. I will continue to work with my colleagues to support policies that support clean energy production and energy efficiency.

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, today we are considering the so-called President Obama's Proposed 2012–2017 Offshore Drilling Lease Sale Plan Act (H.R. 6168).

This legislation, to require the Department of the Interior to conduct the very offshore drilling plan they are already set to implement, has been rushed to floor just so that the majority could vote against it in a political stunt. Even the sponsor of this bill will oppose it.

Although I have serious concerns with the DOI's plan to hold lease sales in the Arctic, where spill response capabilities are virtually nonexistent and the merits of opening this pristine environment to drilling remain unclear, the DOI's five-year plan stands in stark contrast to the House Republican plan for offshore oil and gas development.

The Republican plan amounts to yet another attempt to open up nearly every last piece of our public lands to drilling and hand even more giveaways to Big Oil. It is important to note that the President's plan does not provide for oil and gas lease sales off of the coast of New Jersey.

For these reasons, I will vote for H.R. 6168. But I want the RECORD to reflect that my vote for this bill is not an endorsement of expanded drilling in the Arctic or seismic exploration off of the coast of New Jersey. I strongly oppose drilling off of the coast of New Jersey and in the Mid-Atlantic and I offered an amendment to the bill we are considering to prevent any new drilling in that region.

Along with my Democratic colleagues on the Natural Resources Committee, I have offered bills to implement the safety recommendations of the National Commission on the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and to establish a fee on inactive leases as an incentive for oil companies to begin producing on the lands they already hold—of course, applying up-to-date environmental and safety lessons. I also introduced the Big Oil Bailout Prevention Act to make sure that oil companies pay the full cost of damages resulting from future oil spills.

We should be considering these important reform bill not political stunts designed to let

the majority pat themselves on the back about what a good job they are doing to promote the development of the natural resources that belong to all Americans.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6168.

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. HASTINGS of Washington. 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.

CONGRESSIONAL REPLACEMENT OF PRESIDENT OBAMA'S ENERGY-RESTRICTING AND JOB-LIMITING OFFSHORE DRILLING PLAN

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and add extraneous material on H.R. 6082.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Washington?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 738 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 6082.

Will the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. EMERSON) kindly retake the Chair.

□ 1322

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 6082) to officially replace, within the 60-day Congressional review period under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, President Obama's Proposed Final Outer Continental Shelf Oil & Gas Leasing Program (2012–2017) with a congressional plan that will conduct additional oil and natural gas lease sales to promote offshore energy development, job creation, and increased domestic energy production to ensure a more secure energy future in the United States, and for other purposes, with Mrs. EMERSON (Acting Chair) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Acting CHAIR. When the Committee of the Whole rose on Tuesday, July 24, 2012, a request for a recorded vote on amendment No. 8 printed in part C of House Report 112–616 by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) had been postponed.