

oil in the gulf. We cannot drill for oil in the ANWR in Alaska. I've been up there and talked to the gentleman who represents Alaska in the Congress, DON YOUNG. He'll tell you there's nothing up there that's going to be damaged if we drill, and besides that, you can do it in an environmentally safe way. But we can't drill offshore because they've limited permits. The President is now saying he'll allow some permits, but they are very minimal.

□ 1010

We can't drill on the Continental Shelf. We can't drill in the ANWR. We can't do anything to explore really for additional energy. We have probably a couple hundred years' supply of natural gas that we can drill for and use the fracking procedure, but a lot of the environmentalists are trying to stop that as well.

Our dependency on the Middle East is unbelievable. There's a potential for a major war over there because of Iran's nuclear development program, and we continue to depend on energy from that Persian Gulf area, from the Saudis. They're using a lot of our money to support Wahhabism and the madrassas over there that create radical Islam. So we need to move away from dependency on foreign oil.

In South America, President Chavez in Venezuela—who doesn't like us—is working with Tehran. He's selling his oil to China, and yet we buy an awful lot of our oil from him because we're dependent on him. We need to move toward energy independence.

The President will not allow the gulf pipeline, the pipeline from Canada down to Texas, because of environmental concerns. That's been looked at for 3 years. There's other ways around the potential problem, but he won't let it happen because of environmentalists, the radicals.

Now, we can depend in the future, to a degree, on wind, solar, geothermal, and nuclear, but that's going to take a long time. Even if we use all of those technologies today, it will only be a drop in the bucket as far as our energy needs are concerned. You know who's demanding more and more energy all the time? China and India buy thousands and thousands of barrels of oil a day, so that oil that's coming out of other parts of the world is going to be gobbled up more and more and more by China and India. We need to move to energy independence.

The President says, oh, you know, we can't solve the problem by drilling. The fact is we can. There's a lot of things we can do: the pipeline from Canada, drill offshore, drill in the gulf, drill in the Continental Shelf, use more natural gas, do away with all the regulations that are strangling the private sector as far as energy development. So what does he want to do? He says we've got to raise taxes on energy exploration, on the oil companies. That's going to be passed on to the consumer in higher prices.

This administration, nice guy, good smile, gives a great speech, but he's not solving our problems, and our dependency continues to increase on foreign energy. We need to move toward energy independence, and we need to do it now and not wait until after the election.

CORPORATE PERSONHOOD

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, it's interesting listening to the fantasy Republican talking points. The fact is we are now drilling more oil in the United States than ever before. The inconvenient facts get in the way of political talking points. But what is not a fantasy is what is happening on the political screen.

In the final 3 months of 2011, the campaign to reelect President Obama and the Democratic National Committee raised \$68 million, an impressive sum, all the more impressive because it was donated by 583,000 Americans who gave an average of \$55 each. But earlier this month, at a retreat at the exclusive Renaissance Esmeralda Resort in southern California, the conservative billionaire Koch brothers said they would donate a combined \$60 million to super PACs to defeat President Obama. Two billionaire brothers with opinions radically at variance with most of America are poised to cancel out the efforts of half a million American citizens.

To understand this gross perversion of the political process, we don't have to wait for the general election and the avalanche of negative campaign ads against the President. We can look right now at the primary election for the Republican Presidential nomination, where we've seen a handful of billionaires and their super PACs outspend all the Republican candidates and help turn that contest into a circus.

The sad reality is that the super PACs have shaped the political campaign more than the candidates. That's the world we live in since the Supreme Court's tragic decision in *Citizens United*, which overturned a century of settled law and opened this floodgate of unlimited campaign spending, drowning out small donors and individuals that most of us learned in school were the cornerstone of our democracy. This Supreme Court ruling was based on the perverse idea that the Court's out-of-touch majority somehow felt corporations should enjoy the same constitutional rights as people. This threatens the integrity of the political process, not just from the appearance of corruption, but actually, blatantly, distorting the process.

As companies and sham independent organizations that are actually run by candidates' friends and employees blanket the airwaves with an ava-

lanche of vicious negative advertising, now somehow they are protected under a First Amendment right of free speech which would be beyond the comprehension of our Founding Fathers. Mitt Romney may believe that corporations are people, but do the rest of us need a comedian like Steven Colbert to remind us that only people are people?

There's an outside chance of relief from a century-old Montana law banning corporate corruption in their political landscape, which was passed after the most egregious and well-documented abuse in Montana. A case about this law would provide the Supreme Court a lifeline to climb down from the precarious and dangerous constitutional ledge, a ledge that they have not only crawled out onto, but they dragged the American people and the political process with them with their *Citizens United* decision.

There's a chance that the Supreme Court will use this Montana law to reestablish the basic parameters protecting the political process from the corruption of vast sums of unregulated corporate money. But in the meantime, it's important that we advance a constitutional amendment that would eliminate the notion of corporate personhood, explicitly stating that the rights of natural persons may only be afforded to real people, not corporations.

As we work to overturn *Citizens United* and ban corporate personhood, people should not have to wait to judge whether a candidate is representing the public or representing their benefactors. We should pass the DISCLOSE Act, H.R. 4010, to require political spending by corporations and individuals to be fully transparent. We should be unstinting in other efforts in the regulatory and legal process to make sure that shareholders of corporations have an opportunity to at least know, and maybe even have a say, about what the corporations that they are supposed to own are doing on their behalf. We should support H.R. 1404, the Fair Elections Now Act, to promote public campaign financing to ensure the public's voice is not drowned out by moneyed special interests.

The Supreme Court's decision on *Citizens United* was based on fantasy, the fantasy that vast sums of money from hidden special interest are not inherently corrupted; the fantasy that corporations should be afforded all the rights of citizens; the fantasy that super PACs run by individuals who are the closest allies, friends, and employees of candidates are somehow independent.

What is not a fantasy is what we see right now on the political landscape, the terrifying effect of super PACs and the flood of money hopelessly distorting the campaigns. We should all fight to change it.

AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from

North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, today the Republicans held a conference—the Democrats do the same thing during the week, talk about issues—and I had a couple of minutes to remind our Speaker of the House, JOHN BOEHNER, whom I like, think the world of him, that as he was talking about the domestic policies of the President and how many of them seem to be failed policies, I said, well, how about the failed policy in Afghanistan?

I had written the Speaker back in November asking him to please take just a few minutes to talk to a retired marine general who has been my adviser on Afghanistan for 3 years. He agrees with me, the general does, that we're not going to win anything there; we just let our precious resources, our children, go there and lose their legs and lives, for what, we don't know.

I asked the Speaker—we did it in a bipartisan way. In fact, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN), who will be speaking shortly after me, we did a bipartisan letter, three Democrats and three Republicans, asking Mr. BOEHNER and also Ms. PELOSI to go read the National Intelligence Estimate on Afghanistan that came out in December.

□ 1020

If they would read it, they would be better informed and better understand those of us who want to get out.

I had emailed the commandant of the Marine Corps who has been my adviser. He is retired now. Right before the burning of the Koran in Afghanistan—what I'm going to share for the record is an email that happened before the burning of the Koran. I quote the general:

Attempting to find a true military and political answer to the problems in Afghanistan would take decades, not years, and drain our Nation of precious resources—with the most precious being our sons and daughters.

Simply put, the United States cannot solve the Afghan problem, no matter how brave and determined our troops are. We need to bring our people home and prepare for the real danger that is growing in the Pacific.

Mr. Speaker, I read that today in the conference. As you know, Mr. Speaker, we only have 1 minute and a lot of Members want to speak on different subjects. In addition, I did get time to read from a VSO team leader. The VSO team leader happens to be a young marine officer. VSO means village stability operation. This young marine, this team leader, emailed a friend of mine who emailed to me:

If you ask me if it's worth a single American life to build governance here in Afghanistan, I would have to say no.

Sometimes it is very perplexing to me in terms of just where is the outrage in this country. I've seen so many wounded from my district of Camp Lejeune, of marines and soldiers who have lost legs and arms. I have even

seen four young men that have no body parts below their waist. They are living and they will live, but they have nothing below their waist.

I don't know where the Congress is, quite frankly. We're going to be there until 2014 unless we get out sooner. I've got a feeling we'll probably be there a little bit longer than 2015, knowing the way both parties feel about this. There's nothing we're going to change. Karzai half the time doesn't like us; the other half he does. It is all about the \$10 billion a month. He wants that money to buy some roads and fur caps and stick some money in foreign countries so when his administration collapses in Afghanistan, he's got some money to fall back on.

Mr. Speaker, I'm just going to take another minute and then I'm going to close.

In Marine Times recently there was an article called: "TriCare Costs Would Jump in Budget Plan." If we forget our veterans of yesterday and our veterans of today, I think God will punish America. These young men and women and now the older veterans are older men and women and did so much for America to make it the greatest Nation in the world because they were willing to sacrifice and give of themselves. But if we're going to continue to borrow money from China to send \$10 billion a month to Karzai, \$120 billion a year, that to me is a sin, quite frankly.

We need to wake up in this country and figure out if we're going to fix our problems. We should start right here in America and fix our problems before we worry about the world's problems. Seventy-two of our servicepeople have been killed by the trainees in Afghanistan that they were trying to train to be policemen or soldiers. Seventy-two have been shot or killed by the people they were training. Where in the world does that make any sense? It doesn't make any sense. It is time for America to wake up and demand that Congress get our troops out now, not in 2014.

Before I close, as I always do, I ask God to please bless our men and women in uniform. I ask God to please bless the families of our men and women in uniform. I ask God in His loving arms to hold the families who have given a child dying for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq. I ask God to bless the House and Senate, that we will do what is right in the eyes of God for His people here in the United States of America. I ask God to please bless the President of the United States, that he will do what is right in the eyes of God for God's people here in the United States.

And I close three times: God, please, God, please, God, please continue to bless America.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
Washington, DC, February 10, 2012.

Hon. JOHN BOEHNER,
Speaker, House of Representatives, U.S. Capitol,
Washington, DC.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Democratic Leader, The Capitol, Washington,
DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER AND DEMOCRATIC LEADER: I would like to bring your attention to

Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Davis' recent assessment of the situation in Afghanistan that was published in the New York Times on February 6, 2012 (attached). It is vastly different than the one that the U. S. Congress has been receiving from the Obama Administration. Many of us have read the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) for December 2011 and found it supports Lieutenant Colonel Davis' analysis. We encourage you to read the NIE as well.

Therefore, we think that Lieutenant Davis' analysis merits attention by the relevant committees of jurisdiction in the U. S. House of Representatives and we respectfully request that you encourage the relevant Chairmen to hold hearings as soon as possible and invite Lieutenant Colonel Davis to be a witness. As we withdraw from Afghanistan, it is vital that the Congress hear another perspective from what we have heard for over ten years. Thank you for your careful consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

WALTER B. JONES,
Member of Congress.
JIMMY DUNCAN,
Member Congress.
JIM MCGOVERN,
Member of Congress.
JOHN GARAMENDI,
Member of Congress.
TIMOTHY V. JOHNSON,
Member of Congress.
BARBARA LEE,
Member of Congress.

WOMEN'S HEALTH IN THE TWILIGHT ZONE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, lately, I along with many other women have felt like we're a mere supporting cast in an episode of "The Twilight Zone." I can just hear the narration of the show saying:

You're traveling through another dimension, a dimension not only of sight and sound, but of mind. That is the signpost up ahead: Your next stop, the Twilight Zone.

The rhetoric espoused over the last few weeks by many conservatives has me feeling as if I'm in an alternative political universe where men say the most oddly absurd things about what women should be doing with their bodies. In this universe, the House Committee on Government Oversight and Reform holds hearings on women's health and contraception with a panel made up completely of men.

This may seem odd to you folks out there in the real world; but in this alternate reality, it makes perfectly good sense that a bunch of middle-aged men, devoid of ovaries and uteruses, would be experts on women's reproductive health. In this alternate universe, you wouldn't dare ask a woman to testify on women's health and what it means to be a woman. You wouldn't invite them to talk about what it means to be susceptible to pregnancy for approximately 30 years of their lives and how important birth control is to women who wish to prevent unintended pregnancies and to preserve their health. You surely wouldn't ask a woman to testify about how birth control has helped them prevent various