APPRECIATION FOR THE WORDS OF PRESIDENT KARZAI

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

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to add my appreciation and applause for the words of President Karzai of Afghanistan. We had the great pleasure as members of the Afghanistan Caucus, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY) the Chair, and myself as cochair, along with other Members of Congress, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KANJORSKI) and the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) to visit most recently in Afghanistan and to see the real examples of progress that have been made and particularly the provisional reconstruction teams of our military who are engaged in building clinics and schools, hospitals and homes.

We do know that there is more work to be done. There is work to be done with the warlords and the militias. It is imperative that we stay the course as it relates to the war on terror in Afghanistan and to focus on not having distractions that keep us from finishing our commitment there. It is not going to be easy to have unfettered elections, safe elections; and it will take the will of the people of Afghanistan as well as the will of this Nation.

At the same time, I would hope that we would focus on other issues of concern as we work toward a free and independent and secure Afghanistan.

DRILLING IN ANWR

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

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, energy and independence should be a goal of this Congress. Worldwide demand for petroleum has increased in the last decade. The growth in production has been relatively flat. The inevitable result is in higher prices at the gasoline pump. This reality is that it takes time to go from an oil field to the gasoline station, and we have lost a considerable amount of time.

In 1995, the 104th Congress passed H.R. 2491, which would have allowed oil exploration in the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge. The Department of Energy has estimated that between 1 and 1.3 million barrels of oil a day could be derived from this source.

Unfortunately, this legislation was vetoed by President Clinton, and that was nearly 10 years ago. Given a time line of 7 to 14 years for building a pipeline structure, it is time we could scarcely afford to waste.

Mr. Speaker, I have been to ANWR. The vast coastal plain is unsuitable for habitation during the summer months because of the marshy consistency of that plain. Any caribou unlucky enough to calve in this region would likely die from exsanguination at the hands of mosquitoes there.

The people who live in ANWR are counting on this Congress to do the right thing and allow them, the rightful owners of these mineral rights, to begin developing resources.

WE NEED A PRESIDENT NOT TIED TO THE OIL INDUSTRY

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

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, the administration's energy program will be rubber stamped once again by this Congress. It is the rubber stamp Congress; anything the president wants, they get it.

Let me summarize it. The Vice President holds secret meetings with oil representatives, and then gas prices soar to the highest levels in two decades; American consumers pay $25 billion more; oil companies make $34 billion more; oil company profits increase 165 percent at one company and 294 percent at another company; and now the administration wants to drill in ANWR, the fragile Arctic National Wildlife Reserve.

At this rate, the administration will make an oil drilling rig part of the new Visitor's Center complex out in front of the Capitol.

This administration has sold out the American people to big oil. It is time for that well to run dry before there is more damage to the wallet of American consumers or the fragile environment that we need to protect. We need a President who is not tied to the oil industry.

CALLING FOR A COMPREHENSIVE ENERGY POLICY

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, last week the Associated Press reported that Iraqis are paying 5 cents for a gallon of gas; 5 cents, a nickel. Why are the Iraqis getting such a good deal while the rest of the world has an energy crisis? Because the American taxpayer is subsidizing the Iraqis to the tune of $167 million a month so they can get discounted gasoline. This comes to $500 million every 3 months, $1 billion every 6 months, $2 billion over the year.

Here in America, hard-working families are paying close to $2, if not more, per gallon, up 50 cents since the beginning of the war in Iraq.

Since this is energy week here in Congress, what are we doing? We are bringing up a piece of legislation that a Republican Senator dubbed the ''No Lobbyist Left Behind'' bill for the energy industry. For too long, this administration has two sets of books, and values: One for Iraq and one for America.

We cannot deny Americans the same dreams of affordable health care, quality education and affordable energy that we promise Iraqis. The same values that we hold for Iraq, we must pledge to Americans.

Mr. Speaker, this week we should work to solve the Nation's energy needs, and not retread bad policy.

AMERICANS TIRED OF BIASED, LIBERAL, SHODDY NEWS REPORTING

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, last week on the evening news, Dan Rather, nicknamed ''Rather Biased'' by those of us who are conservative or those of us who just like fair reporting in general, spent 2 minutes reporting a story about 1,300 layoffs in Ohio. That certainly is something that is of concern, and yet at the same time he only spent 20 seconds reporting that 947,000 new jobs have been created in the last 3 months.

I realize that the media loves to dwell on the negative, but they also completely can ignore the fact that the unemployment rate is down to 5.6 percent, which is a lower rate than it averaged in 1970s, 1980s and 1990s; home ownership has risen to its highest level at 68 percent; and real disposable income is up nearly 4 percent this year. The economy is coming back and coming back strong, and yet the media still wants to dwell on the negative.

But then again it is no surprise. Their real goal is not journalism, but to get JOHN KERRY elected president. No wonder Fox, ''fair and balanced news,'' has come on as one of the strongest cable networks that there is, Mr. Speaker. I think Americans have absolutely had enough with biased, liberal, shoddy reporting.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4513, RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECT SITING IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2004, AND H.R. 4529, ARTIC COSTAL PLAIN SURFACE MINING IMPROVMENT ACT OF 2004

Mr. REYNOLDS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 672 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 672

Resolved, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 4513) to provide that in preparing an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement required under section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 with respect to any action authorizing a renewable energy project, no Federal agency is required to identify alternative project locations or actions other than the proposed action and the

no action alternative, and for other purposes. The bill shall be considered as read for amendment. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and on any amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate on the bill equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Resources; (2) the amendment printed in part A of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution, if offered by Representative Pombo of California or his designee, which shall be in order without intervention of any point of order or demand for division of the question, shall be considered as read, and shall be separately debatable for ten minutes equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent; and (3) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. Upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 4529) to provide for exploration, development, and production of oil and gas resources on the Arctic Coastal Plain of Alaska, to resolve outstanding issues relating to the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977, to benefit the coal miners of America, and for other purposes. The bill shall be considered as read for amendment. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and on any amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate on the bill, with 50 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Resources and 10 minutes equally divided and controlled by chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means; (2) the amendment in the nature of a substitute printed in part B of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution, if offered by Representative Pombo of California or his designee, which shall be in order without intervention of any point of order, shall be considered as read, and shall be separately debatable for ten minutes equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent; and (3) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

□ 1045

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BASS). The gentleman from New York (Mr. REYNOLDS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. REYNOLDS. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

(Mr. REYNOLDS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. REYNOLDS. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 672 is a modified, closed rule that provides for consideration of H.R. 4513, the Renewable Energy Project Siting Improvement Act of 2004; and H.R. 4529, the Arctic Coastal Plain and Surface Mining Improvement Act of 2004.

For consideration of H.R. 4513, the rule provides 1 hour of general debate and makes in order the manager's amendment printed in part A of the Committee on Rules report. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

For consideration of H.R. 4529, the rule provides 1 hour of general debate and makes in order the substitute amendment printed in part B of the Committee on Rules report. The rule also provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

Mr. Speaker, energy diversity is vital to our economy and our national security. We must continue to explore affordable and sustainable power supplies. Whether we look to wind, solar, biomass, or geothermal energy, we ought to have a straightforward method for granting project approval to future energy activities.

H.R. 4513 streamlines the process by which environmentally responsible renewable energy projects are considered and approved by Federal agencies holding jurisdiction over the project. The current system of environmental review does not allow for an expedited process in approving or disapproving a submitted project. By simplifying the review procedures, we can improve protection for the environment by directing our efforts to the most reasonable projects.

Since renewable energy projects are largely ''place-based,'' occurring in the area where the resources are found, the only decision needed is whether to authorize or not authorize the proposal. The agency should reply simply on the merits and the environmental effects of the proposal.

The provisions of H.R. 4513 also succeed in protecting capital investments by reducing the regulatory risk of doing business. The restructured system of approval will encourage the commitment to capital, to alternative energy sources without fear of extensive litigation, requiring commonsense analysis; modification through mitigation; and, if mitigation is not good enough, denial of the permit.

Mr. Speaker, just as important as meeting our energy needs with affordable, reliable, secure, and sustainable power supplies, the underlying bill also creates jobs for Americans, from highly skilled labor to a stimulation of local construction and manufacturing jobs. In general, wind power creates 2.77 jobs for every megawatt produced; solar panels create 7.24 jobs per megawatt; and geothermal energy projects create 5.67 jobs per megawatt.

The commonsense changes in the underlying bill are good for our economy, while being good for our environment.

Mr. Speaker, the second bill brought for consideration under this rule is H.R. 4529, the Arctic Coastal Plain and Surface Mining Improvement Act of 2004. The bill establishes a competitive oil and gas leasing program for exploration, development, and production of oil and natural gas resources on the Coastal Plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

This area is the largest unexplored, potentially productive on-shore basin in the United States. And the development of the coastal plain could significantly reduce our Nation's dependency on foreign resources. In fact, it is estimated that we could produce between 1 million and 1.5 million barrels of oil a day, the equivalent of 1 million to 1.3 million barrels of oil we currently import daily from Saudi Arabia.

Under H.R. 4529, additional requirements are established to ensure that oil and natural gas activities do not have significant adverse effects on wildlife and the environment. It ensures that the best commercially available technology is utilized to achieve these environmental protections.

Furthermore, not only is there a limit of 2,000 acres surface disturbance, but the Secretary of the Interior may also designate up to 45,000 acres on the coastal plain as protected for unique or sensitive areas. These environmental controls would be the strongest ever adopted into Federal law and would not interfere with any existing State or Federal regulations.

Exploration and future development of the coastal plain also generates jobs. Based on potential sales by oil and gas producers and field surface companies, estimates show that the possible job creation is in the tens of thousands.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to conservation and development of alternative energies, any comprehensive and sensible energy plan must include increased domestic production to reduce our reliance on foreign oil. The House recognized that fact when we passed an energy conference report with strong bipartisan support of 246 to 180.

The case for increasing domestic production is compelling. In 2004, the United States relied on foreign imports for 62 percent of its crude oil needs; and according to the Energy Information Administration, that will increase to 70 percent by the year 2025. Even during the oil embargo and subsequent energy crisis in 1973, imports accounted for only 35 percent of the U.S. crude oil.

Since 2001, consumers have seen the average price of a gallon of gasoline increase by 52 percent and home heating oil by 33 percent. The price of a barrel of oil increased by 74 percent during that time, from just over $23 a barrel in 2001 to more than $40 a barrel today. To ease that dependency in just the past 3 years, we have twice approved legislation allowing for the development of the coastal plain. It is time to finally move forward to reduce our Nation's foreign dependency and explore our oil and gas production on the coastal plain.

H.R. 4529 also reauthorizes the Abandoned Mine Claims Program, the AML, for an additional 15 years. This bill continues the industry's commitment to the remediation of abandoned mines which protects communities all across this Nation. Unused mines can sometimes appear to be adventurous places, especially for children. Yet they are actually extremely dangerous and cause too many needless deaths each year. The reclamation of these mines is essential to keep the communities around unused sites as safe as possible.

H.R. 4529 additionally resolves the historic State share reclamation funding issue by providing for reimbursement of funds owed to States.

Another key component of the legislation provides for the permanent solvency of the Combined Benefits Fund, which provides health care benefits for retired miners and their dependents. This will be achieved with a Federal share of money received from future oil production on the coastal plain, providing long-term solvency for the Combined Benefits Fund and future health care premiums of those coal miners currently being funded by the so-called ''reachback'' companies.

Mr. Speaker, the Committee on Resources, in consultation with the Committee on Ways and Means, has worked on these commonsense and fair reforms for some time, and I would like to commend both the chairmen and the ranking members of these committees for their tireless support of so many issues surrounding our Nation's energy resources and ask my colleagues to support the underlying bills.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. REYNOLDS), my friend, for yielding me this time, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to this closed rule and the two underlying resolutions. Let me say that one more time: the two underlying resolutions.

It is double-coupon day here in the House of Representatives. In two separate instances today, Republicans are forcing the House to consider two bills under one rule. Adding insult to injury, every rule we will consider today is closed, and none of the underlying bills have been considered in substantive part by the respective committees of jurisdiction.

With the exception of two manager's amendments, this rule allows for zero amendments to either bill. Zero amendments for the people's House to consider. Zero amendments to improve two bills that incorporate in the main only the ideas of their two sponsors without the input of anyone else.

The majority has skirted the legislative process, shut Members out, and stifled debate before it even begins. All this so it can pass a few politically driven bills that do nothing to address escalating gasoline costs and have zero chance of becoming law. Even the chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON), said last night in the Committee on Rules that he thought bringing these bills to the floor prior to committee consideration was shortsighted.

Just last week, Congress heard calls from the American public to set aside its differences and work in a bipartisan fashion. How short Republican memories are.

The rule we are considering at this moment is almost oxymoronic. On one hand, the rule provides for consideration of a bill addressing renewable resources. On the other hand, the same rule provides for consideration of another bill that authorizes drilling for nonrenewable resources in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, one of the country's most pristine areas. Republican policies just do not make any sense. While I certainly commend the majority for finally jumping on the renewable resource band wagon, their approach toward energy policy greatly misses the mark.

Each energy-related bill this body is considering today focuses on increasing production, while doing nothing to curb consumption. These bills abandon our responsibility to protect the environment, and they lay the groundwork for the construction of a new wave of refineries and energy plants in low-income and historically underserved areas, without protecting the health and well-being of the residents of these communities.

The Renewable Energy Project Siting Improvement Act and the U.S. Refinery Revitalization Act, which will be considered under the next rule, unjustly streamline the Federal authorization process for new refineries by targeting low-income and high unemployment areas for new sites.

I offered an amendment to the U.S. Refinery Act last night in the Committee on Rules that would have required the Secretary of Energy to just consider any adverse effect that the siting of a new refinery would have on the community in which the site would be located. It also required a 90-day public comment period to ensure that those living near a future refinery site be given an opportunity to voice their concerns.

Mr. Speaker, we all know the effects that Superfund sites have had on underserved communities. We have all heard the stories of cancer, birth defects, prolonged illnesses, and death caused by contamination at these sites.

□ 1100

Today, this body is laying the foundation for a new wave of Superfund sites and all of their downfalls. My amendment was fair and responsible to those who will be most affected by a new site. But as they so often do, the majority denied the House from considering a common sense amendment. In this case, Democrats are only secondary victims. The real victims are those who could soon find themselves living next to a new refinery which the Federal Government encouraged an energy corporation to build. Moreover, under this scenario, Congress is not taking the necessary steps to consider the health needs of those living in that community.

Mr. Speaker, Congress has a responsibility to the American people to develop and implement a responsible and long-term energy plan. Democrats agree with Republicans on this. However, Democrats also believe that all of us, from both sides of the aisle, need to be involved in the discussion. Our long-term energy plan must focus on reducing consumption instead of increasing production. America's energy woes will continue until we change America's mindset. Mass transit, hybrid automobiles, increasing CAFE standards, and significant involvement in renewable resources are the only way we will accomplish this.

I was saying to staff working with me that 40 years ago I ran for the State legislature in Florida, and what I was advocating at that time was not rocket science. Forty years ago I talked about us having mass transit and using solar energy and using wind and renewable resources. Forty years since I now am in the House of Representatives and what we were still doing is talking rather than acting on the consumption side trying to reduce same. None of the underlying pieces of legislation address any of these issues and the process in which they are being brought to the floor is downright reckless, and we continue this policy which began a few weeks back of bringing up separate bills under the same rule. Any bill, any bill that blocks Members of the House of Representatives, the people's House, from offering an amendment is closed. And Republicans have made it clear that debate on the House floor is not open for business. I think that that is a mistake on their behalf and I hearken back to my friends in the majority and how it was that they railed against Democrats in another era for closed rules. That is all you could hear on talk radio, closed rules.

Well, I can tell the American public that all you are getting from this Republican majority are closed rules, which shuts out debate not only of Democrats but Republicans. This is the people's House and closed rules do not give the people their voice.

I urge my colleagues to reject this rule and the underlying pieces of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, my colleague the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) covered a lot of ground in his opening remarks, and I think with the basis of the four bills that we were considering we need to review a few things to set the record clearly straight.

First, the gentleman and I agree. There should be an energy policy. This House had ample debate on an energy policy. The other body had ample debate on an energy policy. And then we came together as we sent our conferees with the other body's conferees and we came together with a hammered agreement between the two bodies. The House passed that agreement and the House bills were met with the Democratic minority's obstructionism in the other body. And if we would have had a comprehensive energy policy in 2001, we would not have some of the problems we have here today.

The average price of a gallon of gasoline has increased by 52 percent, from $1.34 a gallon in 2001 to $2.05 today. U.S. imports of oil have increased by more than 10 percent. The price of a barrel of oil increased by 74 percent from just over $23 a barrel in 2001 to more than $40 a barrel today, all while the Senate obstructionism on the Democratic side held up an ample debate of the conference committee report.

The cost of home heating oil, which has a real impact to the Northeast where I come from, has increased by more than 33 percent since 2001. The cost of natural gas to heat America's homes has increased by 92 percent. The U.S. has sent more than $300 billion to foreign nations for oil. This amounts to a massive export in American jobs, national security and our economic growth and vitality.

The Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan has recently testified that energy prices are the single greatest threat to job creation and to the continued growth of an otherwise burgeoning economy. And so if the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) agrees with me that we should have an energy policy then it would have been nice to see a conference report just passed by the other body and we would have law today.

But now when we look at four pieces of legislation established under two rules, I will remind my colleagues that while the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) was discussing his amendments, it was for another rule that will come behind there. It was not on the rule that we are now considering in the debate before us. As a matter of fact, in addition to the two manager's amendments which the rule provides for, there was only one other amendment and it was offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KANJORSKI), and I wanted to find why in my view as a member of the Committee on Rules it was not made in order. And so again in the legislation before us there was only one other amendment that came before the Committee on Rules other than the two manager's amendments, the gentleman from Pennsylvania's (Mr. KANJORSKI). And what it did in the amendment, instead of paying the combined benefits fund through the Federal share of money received from future oil production on the coastal plain, the Kanjorski amendment would provide tax credits to the States to bond the issue.

This approach would amount to an estimated $20 billion in bonds, which scores at about $7 billion. In contrast, the approach used in the underlying bill costs only an estimated $2 to $3 billion, which is not only a substantial decrease in the cost to the Federal Government but it is paid for.

As we look at the debate that this body has had on energy policy on the ANWR issue, the full Committee on Resources had a hearing in March of 2003. There was a full committee markup on the overall energy package, including ANWR. The House then approved the energy bill with ANWR in it in April of 2003 and the previous House vote on ANWR was in 2001.

When we look at the AML issue, which is included in the rule today, H.R. 313, the Coal Accountability and Retired Employee Act of the 21st Century, was introduced by the ranking member of the Committee on Resources and is a major component to this ANWR/AML bill.

On October 1, 2003 the full Committee on Resources considered that bill. No amendments were offered and the bill was favorably reported to the House by unanimous consent. H.R. 3796, the Abandoned Land Mines Reclamation Reform Act of 2004, and H.R. 3778, the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program Extension and Reform Act of 2004, were both subject to a Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources hearing on March 30, 2004. Portions of each of these bills are included in the text of this ANWR/AML bill.

Finally, on the renewable energy portion that is in this rule, not to be debated in the next rule, the H.R. 1904, the Healthy Forest Restoration Act, discusses the NEPA in that it reduces the number of alternatives that the decision maker has to choose from, and our program of renewables bill draws upon the very same concept.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that in the two bills before us there has been an ample debate by this body on times before. There have been hearings. And in addition we had an ample Committee on Rules forum yesterday where hearings were held and rules were sent to the floor of these two pieces of legislation which are for consideration today as we have outlined, 4513 and 4529, of which there was only one amendment, which was a far more expensive plan than what is before us in the underlying legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, let me discuss in calm reflection my colleague from New York's comments.

Firstly, he and I were at the Committee on Rules hearing last night and my recollection of the two distinguished chairs, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON) and the gentleman from California (Mr. POMBO), was that they said that these matters as they are brought up on the substantive agenda did not go through regular order insofar as the committees of jurisdiction.

They did in fact say that the issues in both of these measures had been discussed. As a matter of fact, in the gentleman from California's (Mr. POMBO) case, he said that they had been discussed numerous times, and I would imagine some of the issues that the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON) would agree as well. But regular order is what we are talking about here and the committee process was not observed as it pertains to these measures.

What I urge my friend who I serve proudly with on the Committee on Rules is to pay attention to the comments of the chair of the Committee on Rules in another era. What he said was if a rule is not open it is closed and it is just that simple. So I do not understand why we keep playing games of disingenuousness in trying to suggest to the American public that these measures that are coming up are giving every Member of the House of Representatives an opportunity to discuss them and that regular order proceeds.

Additionally, my friend spoke of the other body in terms that I probably could have pointed out to him that it is one thing to say that there is obstruction in the other body, but the last time I looked the majority leader was a Republican and the executive branch of government is in the hands of the Republicans and the House of Representatives is in the hands of the Republicans. So when we talk about obstructionism, I do not think Democrats can be faulted for Republicans not being able to get their measures past their bodies.

But now what are we doing here? Let me tell you what we are doing, and no lesser authority than our good friend, the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) in speaking to reporters, he is quoted as saying, and the backdrop for this is the U.S. House of Representatives may vote today to send oil drills into the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. But the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) is not expecting any backup from the Senate. Young said he viewed the idea as serious but not likely to succeed. The Senate is not going to take it up, so what are we doing here? Are we doing something political or are we doing something to bring down oil prices? Are we doing something political or are we doing something to give the American public the impression that we are doing something about renewable energy? Are we doing something political or are we really going to go after solar and wind resources? Are we doing something political or are we really going to advance hybrid automobiles in this country?

It is funny to me how my former fiscal conservative friends are now decrying our state of this Nation as they run these deficits up and as gas prices go through the roof, and we were here talking about projections for additional instructions to give us an opportunity to produce more energy rather than to learn how to consume less and use modern technology in doing so.

This rule is closed and I urge Members to vote against it.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BASS). The Chair intended, before the remarks of the gentleman from Florida just completed, to admonish Members

to avoid improper references to the Senate, as by characterizing its actions as obstructive.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. The way the Chair phrased it, I did bring it up, and we were talking about statements that were made by my friend from New York; am I correct?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair referred to statements made prior to the comments by the gentleman from Florida.

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

Mr. Speaker, I listen to my colleague talking about regular order and then I do not know, as he has quoted my chairman of the Committee on Rules on, it is either a closed rule or an open rule, but I know the chairman when I was a new member 6 years ago took great pains to guide me on the fact that there is open rules, there is modified rules, there is modified open rules, modified closed rules, structured rules, closed rules; and he began to teach how each one becomes effective and appropriate in doing its duties for the Committee on Rules. But as I listen to my colleague here talk about whether this is political or whether it is governmental, I look and say, great debate in 2003 on energy policy and most people saying that they agreed that there was not an energy policy in the Clinton administration or the Bush 41 administration, and that this President asked the Congress to move forward and establish an energy policy in America.

□ 1115

We had the hearings. We had the debate in the House and the other body had their debate, and as I said earlier in my remarks, we approved conferees to go work with the other body's conference, to have the conferees come together if they could, and they did. We negotiated. This body did not get all they wanted. The other body did not get all that they wanted, a true compromise; and we passed the conference report in this body in a bipartisan fashion.

The other body, they were in a situation where because of the unusual rules that might be foreign to us that exist in the other body, they have got to have 60 votes to stop the debate on an energy policy that was agreed to by a conference of this body and the other body, they could not come up with two extra votes. If my colleagues look, it was a pretty partisan decision.

The reality is as we come down to it is the other body has not done its work.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BASS). The gentleman will suspend.

The Chair must caution the gentleman against making improper references to the Senate. Any characterization of the Senate is out of order.

Mr. REYNOLDS. Mr. Speaker, point of order, I just would like to be able to explain in this debate to my colleagues how we might say that it has not been on the floor because they cannot get it there. I am looking for any direction there could be because it just plain has not been voted on by the Senate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman's factual descriptions are fine, but characterizations should be avoided.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Does the gentleman from New York yield to the gentleman from Texas for that purpose?

Mr. REYNOLDS. Mr. Speaker, I would yield.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman may state his inquiry.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, under the rules of the House, is it inappropriate to state a bald fact about what the other body is doing or not doing?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Would the gentleman restate his question?

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Under the rules of the House, is it inappropriate or without our bounds for a Member of this body, the House of Representatives, to state a plain fact about what the other body is or is not doing? Is that out of the bounds for the rules of this body?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. A factual description of a Senate action of record is permitted.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Is permitted. I thank the Chair.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York may proceed.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. REYNOLDS. I yield to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, in the body of that conference, were Democrats permitted in that conference?

Mr. REYNOLDS. Were they what?

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Were Democrats permitted to attend the conference that the gentleman continues to say was reported out, House Democrats?

Mr. REYNOLDS. Mr. Speaker, to be quite frank, I know many in my district do not really understand this body and the other body. So I am trying to follow the spirit of the law. I do not know if I can answer the gentleman's question.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON), the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the rule; but before I speak in favor of the rule, I would like to answer my good friend from Florida's question.

Conference members of the other body, who are members of the minority party in the other body, not only attended the conference on the comprehensive energy report; several of them signed the conference report for the comprehensive energy bill that was not debated on the other body's floor because of a cloture rule in the other body that required 60 votes to close off debate.

I want to rise in support of the pending rule for the two resource bills that, hopefully, will come up later today if the rule passes; and I want to specifically speak about the second bill that would allow for drilling in ANWR.

Back in 1995 during the reconciliation process, the House and Senate agreed to put in a provision that would allow drilling in ANWR. That was back in 1995. If President Clinton had not vetoed that bill, the mid-case estimate is that we would be producing from ANWR today between 1 million and 1½ million barrels of oil per day. It is estimated that there are over 10 billion barrels of oil in ANWR. What that would do for gasoline prices is debatable in terms of the specific amount, but it is not debatable that gasoline prices would be lower and, in all probability, significantly lower.

So I would hope that when this bill comes up for a vote on final passage that a bipartisan coalition in the House will once again vote to allow, with adequate environmental protections, drilling in ANWR. That is the largest oil field in the world that we know of that currently no drilling is allowed; and with gasoline prices at $2 a barrel, it is time to allow some drilling.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume merely for the purpose of pointing out to the chairman and my good friend, the gentleman from New York (Mr. REYNOLDS), that House Democrats were not permitted to be involved in the conference, House Democrats, not the other body.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

The one thing we should look at is, I am told that from time to time the minority Members of the other body have not gone to conferences. So I am not sure that other than watching that happen, there is anything we can do about it, whether they participate or they do not.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I do not want to belabor this. What part of House Democrats does my colleague not understand?

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

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

The two bills before us make sense on U.S. energy policy. They make sense for our economy, and they make sense for our environment.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. 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 are postponed.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4503, ENERGY POLICY ACT OF 2004, AND H.R. 4517, UNITED STATES REFINERY REVITALIZATION ACT OF 2004

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 671 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 671

Resolved, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 4503) to enhance energy conservation and research and development, to provide for security and diversity in the energy supply for the American people, and for other purposes. The bill shall be considered as read for amendment. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate on the bill, with 40 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce; 10 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Resources; and 10 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means; and (2) one motion to recommit.

SEC. 2. Upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 4517) to provide incentives to increase refinery capacity in the United States. The bill shall be considered as read for amendment. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate on the bill equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce; and (2) one motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

(Mr. HASTINGS of Washington asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 671 is a rule providing for the consideration of H.R. 4503, the Energy Policy Act of 2004; and H.R. 4517, the United States Refinery Revitalization Act of 2004.

The rule provides for 1 hour of general debate on H.R. 4503, with 40 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, 10 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Resources, and 10 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means. The rule also provides one motion to recommit.

Section 2 of the rule provides for 1 hour of general debate on H.R. 4517 to be equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce. The rule also provides one motion to recommit H.R. 4517.

Mr. Speaker, the first bill provided for under the rule, H.R. 4503, reflects the conference report on H.R. 6 that passed the House this November by a vote of 246 to 180. It is a bipartisan, comprehensive energy plan that is focused on providing a secure and diverse energy supply for our Nation.

There is bipartisan agreement on this plan to modernize our power generation systems, improve conservation and promote the development of renewable energy resources. The predominant source of energy varies among the different regions of our country. The bipartisan energy plan is comprehensive and addresses energy produced from oil, natural gas, wind, biomass, solar, coal, nuclear, and hydro.

In my area, the Pacific Northwest, Mr. Speaker, our primary source of power comes from hydroelectric dams. Clean, low-cost hydropower was critical to building the Northwest's economy. Whether it was electricity to irrigate central Washington's farms or to build airplanes in Seattle, it was vital to our economy.

This bipartisan agreement includes reforms to the lengthy and costly dam relicensing process that is critical to maintaining our region's low-cost hydropower. Environmental protections are preserved while providing flexibility to reduce costs and delays. Getting this plan enacted into law will help keep prices lower for Northwest families and for job-creating businesses.

An adequate, affordable energy supply is vital for a growing economy and job creation, and we need to get this plan enacted into law.

Mr. Speaker, today, the United States imports nearly 60 percent of its oil. This energy plan contains provisions to reduce our dependence on oil from the Middle East. The second bill provided for under this rule, H.R. 4517, will also help increase our Nation's energy independence.

The United States Refinery Revitalization Act would responsibly encourage the opening of previously closed refineries in the United States and the construction of new refineries to increase the domestic supply of gasoline which would help lower the price at the pump.

American demand for gasoline and refined fuels currently outpaces the capacity of our Nation to produce these needed products, and consumption of gasoline is expected to rise as our economy grows over the next 2 decades. Our choice as a Nation is to either increase our dependence on foreign sources of fuel or to help ensure refineries are built in America, which will create jobs here rather than at refineries in other countries.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to act and get a bipartisan energy plan enacted into law. It is time to increase America's energy independence. Accordingly, I encourage my colleagues to support both the rule, H. Res. 671, and the two underlying bills, H.R. 4503 and H.R. 4517.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Washington for yielding me the customary 30 minutes, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. MCGOVERN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks, and include extraneous material.)

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to House Resolution 671, which is the rule for the consideration of H.R. 4503, the Energy Policy Act of 2004, which is masquerading today as the energy conference report of 2003; and H.R. 4517, the U.S. Refinery Revitalization Act.

Mr. Speaker, this summer Americans all across the country are flooding into movie theaters to see the much-anticipated sequels to such blockbuster films as ''Shrek,'' ''Spider Man,'' and ''Harry Potter.''

□ 1130

So far the early reviews and box office returns for these sequels suggest Hollywood has actually managed to improve on the original versions by adding exciting new characters and interesting new plot lines.

Sadly, that is not so here in the House of Representatives. This summer, the Republican leadership is forcing us to vote on the same tired old reruns of bad bills that we have already seen and voted on once before. The consideration of H.R. 4503 actually marks the sixth time this year that this House has passed a bill for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD a listing of the bills that the House has voted on at least twice this year.

(1) Bankruptcy. The House passed its bankruptcy reform bill on March 19, 2003 (H.R. 975, vote No. 74) and passed it again on January 28, 2004 when it substituted the text of