

plants being built around the world with price tags of \$1 billion or more each, only one is being built in the United States.

“As a result, Associated Industries of Florida recommends to the MMS that expanded lease sales are important to our country, to our citizens, and to our way of life. To not utilize all of our available energy resources, when it can be accomplished in an environmentally sensitive way, would be a disservice to our country. We need to ensure that we have a bright future by adopting an expansive OCS leasing program.”

Osram Sylvania, a big company that owns a lot of plants in this country, here is what they said: “In the past 5 years, we have seen natural gas prices escalate from \$3 per MCF to well over \$10 on the spot market. As compared to natural gas costs in 2000, our bills in 2005 will be \$24 million higher.”

Mr. Speaker, again, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

THE 30-SOMETHING GROUP: THE DEMOCRATIC BUDGET PROPOSAL

THE SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, first I want to thank the Democratic leader (Ms. PELOSI) of California for the opportunity to spend some time talking about the issues of concern to Americans across this country, and as a member of the 30-something Democrats, and I know I will be joined by my colleagues in a few moments, we have appreciated hearing from the literally hundreds of Americans both in our generation and across the generational spectrum over the last weeks since we have been talking about those issues on the floor here.

My good friend from Pennsylvania, I cannot help but spend a few moments talking about some of the matters that he has just addressed, being that I am a Representative of the State of Florida; and I had an opportunity to engage in a very interesting and informative and timely dialogue with the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PETERSON) just yesterday.

Unfortunately, the industry organization that he just cited, which he also cited in our debate the other night, Associated Industries of Florida, that is not an organization, if the Members are familiar with Florida politics, that is at all representative of the average business organization in our State. Associated Industries of Florida is primarily made up of the most major corporations in Florida. Every major oil company is a member of Associated Industries. So it makes quite a bit of sense that the opinion of Associated Industries would reflect what Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania just described.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania advocates for more drilling off the coast of

Florida, California, all around the coastline of our country. He particularly focuses on natural gas and professes that natural gas is a clean-burning gas and that there would be little to no risk to expanding that drilling. Well, when one is a representative from the State of Florida, and we have 77 million people who visited our State just last year alone and \$56.5 billion in taxable sales is generated by tourism, most of which is the result of our beautiful beaches and our pristine coastline, one can clearly see why most Floridians would have a significant problem with the possibility of there being oil rigs off our beaches within the eyesight of tourists or our residents.

And Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania has continually represented that natural gas is a potential alternative energy source. Well, just off the Florida coastline, the Minerals Management Service, which is a government agency under the Department of the Interior, has documented that there is only about a 70-day supply of natural gas off the coastline of Florida in the gulf under current consumption rates in the United States. That to me does not appear to take us into the rest of the century in terms of dealing with our energy needs.

What we should be doing is uniting as Members of Congress representing this country and dealing with our long-term energy crisis by exploring alternative energy sources, not going to the same old energy sources and trying to drill our way out of this problem. Drilling is not the solution. There is far too much environmental risk to drilling, whether we are drilling for natural gas or drilling for oil; and the proposal that we will be considering that is attached to the budget reconciliation bill, the budget-cut document that we will be considering, at the earliest, next week, includes a terrible proposal that would expand drilling off the coastline of Florida and bring drilling within 125 miles of Florida's coast on the gulf.

That is a totally inappropriate proposal. It makes absolutely no sense. It would jeopardize our environment, and I am hopeful that my colleagues from Florida and other colleagues who represent coastal communities which will also be in jeopardy if this provision passes will join us in opposing this budget reconciliation bill, not the least of which, because there are many other reasons why it should be opposed because of the dire cuts that are in the budget that are going to rain terror down on Americans across this country; but to add insult to injury, it also has a terrible provision in it that would allow drilling off the coastline around our entire country.

So with that having been said, I want to talk a little bit about what we talked about in the previous hour and turn the conversation back to the budget reconciliation bill. There are a number of significant problems with the budget cuts that the Republican

leadership is proposing. But one of the things that I wanted to turn to is what Democrats think we should be doing in terms of the budget.

Democrats want to bring the budget back into balance. What we proposed in the Budget Committee today included a proposal that would bring the budget back into balance by 2012. The Democratic budget also has a smaller deficit than the Republican budget every year and would accumulate less debt and waste fewer resources on interest payments that are needed to service the national debt. We would include budget enforcement measures to protect Social Security.

We would do more for education. The Democratic proposal provides \$4.5 billion more for appropriated education and training programs than the Republican budget for 2006 and \$41 billion more over the next 5 years. We also reject the \$21 billion in cuts that the Republican budget requires the Education and Workforce Committee to make over the next 5 years. Those are cuts that could fall on students loans and school lunches.

These are not the same old tired complaints. It is insulting to suggest that cutting school lunches and financial aid are tired complaints. If one is struggling to be able to give their children breakfast and lunch on a daily basis and make sure that they are provided with nutrition and they do not financially have the ability to ensure that they can do it themselves, staring down budget cuts that take that opportunity away from them is nothing short of cowardly. This is a cowardly budget reconciliation bill. It does not show any guts at all, and it abandons the American people.

Let us talk about housing. In the previous hour, we talked a little bit about the housing cuts that this budget-cut bill would hand down, and I am joined by my good and close friend whom I had an opportunity to serve with in now three different Chambers, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK). His district and my district were hit badly by a category 3 storm last week, Hurricane Wilma; and we were talking in the last hour about housing and the issues related to affordable housing that our constituents were already facing.

I want to just point out this picture here. Over the weekend I had an opportunity to go door to door in my district because there are so many senior citizens trapped in their homes without power. We still have half a million people who do not have power in south Florida. And, unfortunately, whether it is because of hurricane fatigue or just the fact that there was so much damage in the gulf coast region that it may be difficult to feel the pain that we are going through in south Florida and understand it, but there is not nearly as much attention as we need focused on what happened in south Florida.

When I was going to door to door in my district to try to help some of the folks who have trouble getting out of

their houses, and I am talking about people who are in their 80s and 90s, one of the apartments that the building captain in the condominium brought me into included this kind of damage. This is the result of Hurricane Wilma, and this is just one example. There are hundreds and hundreds of condominium units and apartment buildings and homes and mobile homes that look just like this.

There is a perception, whether it was created by the media or created by the lack of attention by the national media on what happened with Hurricane Wilma, that everything is fine in south Florida. Everything is not fine, Mr. Speaker, in south Florida.

This is the third floor apartment, and that is the ceiling of the apartment. And as we can see, we can look right through the ceiling at the sky. This is this woman's master bedroom; and literally during the storm, 1 minute after she walked out of that master bedroom, the roof caved in on her bed. A minute earlier and it would have caved in on her.

When we talk about the affordable housing problem that we already had, now we have thousands of people in south Florida whose homes have been condemned, who are faced with nowhere to go because the average price of a house just in Broward is \$348,000 a year. The rental units, the monthly rent is sky high. And FEMA has literally only 300 inspectors in our State going through these homes to determine whether these people are going to qualify for assistance.

I yield to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) for yielding to me, and I can tell her right now that I shudder when I think about not only the devastation that took place in Hurricane Wilma but what took place in Rita and took place in Katrina and what happened today in the Budget Committee.

I want to make sure that the Members, Mr. Speaker, are fully aware about an act that I did not take part in, an act that not one Democrat on that committee took part in, an act that at least one Republican did not take part in, that is, delivering another catastrophic event to the victims of these three natural disasters.

□ 2230

The cuts that were made today in the Budget Committee, that I must add without one Democratic vote, but with Democratic amendments, to make sure that those victims do not become victims again, were devastating to these individuals; cutting Medicare, cutting programs that will help everyday working Americans, delivering another blow to the gut of the individuals who need us the most.

Let me tell you what the majority side is saying. "Oh, we have to make these offsets to help the Katrina victims."

Hello. No. We have to slap them in the back of the head and push them to the floor because they cannot fight us like the special interests that got what they wanted in this budget, that we are going to make them victims again. That is what that means.

So, I am so glad that we are bringing to light not only Katrina, not only Rita, but also Wilma; that many seniors in our district, and we talked about this a couple of nights ago, or even over the past weeks, we have been fighting for the independent commission so we can review not only the Federal response, but the State response and the local response.

Now, I just want to take two more minutes. Down in Florida with Wilma, when the response was not what it should have been, Governor Bush of Florida jumped out in front of the train and said, "If you want to blame someone, blame me." Well, you know something, I have a message, not only for the Governor, but for anyone willing to step in front of an unorganized response to people in need, because I would say to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN), it could be your communities next. It could be a terrorist attack.

So I guess the Governor could not do it in Mississippi, he could not do it in Louisiana, he could not do it in Alabama, he could not run over to Texas and jump in front of FEMA and say "blame me." This is bigger than an individual. This is making sure we can respond to Americans.

I would say to the gentlewoman from Florida, I would make this point to what the gentlewoman is pointing out here, that what can you say to this senior that you are in his bedroom there, I believe that is his bedroom where the ceiling came down, or another person's bedroom fell down into their home.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. The woman had to leave that apartment.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. So it is a condemned apartment. She cannot live in it. Not only are there only 300 FEMA inspectors of over 100,000 and counting condemned residences in Dade, Broward and Palm Beach Counties. Even in Broward County, well over the number. We are going to send 300 people down there to inspect before we are able to assist them. That is the reason why we need an independent Katrina commission, to make sure we are able to respond to Americans in need.

So when folks come to the floor and start talking about, well, you know, I do not know why they are complaining, because everything seems to be okay and the lights are on here in the Chamber and democracy is strong, we have Americans out there that are suffering and we have to give them voice.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, if the gentlewoman will yield, I want to share with the Speaker and the American people to get this in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD some of the e-mails

that Brownie was sending on the day of the Katrina tragedy and the days after the Katrina tragedy.

First of all, this is about cronyism in politics at its best, a culture of cronyism and a culture of corruption. We see it all the time at the local, sometimes at the local level, but the way that the cronyism has permeated, permeated, the Federal Government with President Bush's friends is really absolutely sickening.

This is an article today out of CNN.com. The quotes are posted on websites. The gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. MELANCON), from New Orleans, has all of the quotes posted on his website from Brown, the former head of FEMA on the day of the Katrina tragedy. This is just startling. This is just startling.

First let me say that Mr. Brown spent a decade as the Stewards and Judges Commissioner of the International Arabian Horse Association. How he ended up as the head of the FEMA agency is beyond my ability as a human being to put into my head, to conceptualize. I cannot believe that the President would put someone who was the Commissioner of the International Arabian Horse Association in charge of FEMA. He did not get an appointment as an ambassador to a country that has a lot of beaches. He ends up in charge of FEMA after 9/11.

Here is what he says, one of the e-mails. Brown wrote to Cindy Taylor, FEMA's deputy director of public affairs the morning of the hurricane, "Can I quit now? Can I come home?"

A few days later Brown wrote to an acquaintance, "I am trapped now. Please rescue me."

I mean, give me a break. A few days later, Brown is talking to his PR director, his press secretary, Sharon Worthy, about his attire, asking her, can you imagine this, asking her "Tie or not for tonight? Button down blue shirt?" He is asking her about what he should wear.

This is a couple days after Katrina, when the American people were watching on all the cable news channels people suffering in pools of water, flooding everywhere, nothing to eat, people who do not have their insulin, old folks starving to death, dehydrating, no water, no ice, and this guy is saying "I am trapped now, please rescue me?" Is that the kind of leadership we want? No. The United States wants leadership and we get cronyism.

A few days later, she says, this is his press secretary again, "Please roll up the sleeves of your shirt, all shirts. Even the President rolled his sleeves to just below the elbow. In this crisis and on TV you just need to look more hard-working."

You got to be kidding me. This is what your FEMA director is doing during Katrina? He is talking with his press secretary, who said roll up your shirt sleeves so you look like you are working.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. This is the person that we still have on the payroll to teach us what to do.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Still on the parole for \$148,000.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. A culture of corruption and cronyism.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. This is cronyism at its best, because this fellow is not the least bit qualified to be in charge of FEMA. The top 8 or 10 people of FEMA were all political appointments of people who were not qualified.

We want an independent commission to oversee this whole process. Why? Because this could have been a terrorist attack, and we have got someone in charge of responding to the terrorist attack who is talking about rolling up his shirt sleeves so he looks good on CNN.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, it is worse. It got worse from there. It was not just what he was doing with his attire, rolling up his shirt sleeves, but what he was wearing that they continued to talk about. On August 29, the day of the storm, Brown exchanged e-mails about his attire with Ms. Taylor, his press secretary again. She told him in the e-mail, "You look fabulous." And Brown replied, "I got it at Nordstrom's. Are you proud of me?"

An hour later he added, "If you look at my lovely FEMA attire, you will really vomit. I am a fashion God."

This is the day of the storm. He is still being paid \$148,000 a year to advise FEMA, according to Secretary Chertoff, and change, give or take a dollar or two, to advise FEMA about what they should be doing in the aftermath.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And we are getting lectured to by people telling us that that party on that side of the aisle is responsible? Is this responsible? Is that good leadership? We have not seen good leadership out of this administration yet. Come on.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. The only thing that they are doing here is they have a lopsided partisan committee that is supposedly reviewing the aftermath of Katrina and FEMA's response. You know, I would feel much better about any review, although I strongly believe that there should be an independent Katrina commission, as do 81 percent of Americans, but if they had learned something between storms.

We have had three storms in two months, from Katrina to Rita and from Rita to Wilma. They have learned nothing. After my district and that of the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) district got hit by Wilma, and Secretary Paulison now in FEMA is a qualified professional, so at least they have that right now, but unfortunately FEMA still is not getting it right.

We still 10 days after the storm do not have a disaster recovery center established in Broward County or in Miami Dade County, a permanent one. There are seven mobile units between the two counties. We have more than

136,000 people in Broward alone who have applied for assistance, and they cannot get it yet because FEMA only has 300 inspectors in the whole state and they can do about 10 a day in terms of the inspections.

I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I think it has become clear to us, and, again, also I think it is important to note that many on the other side of the aisle have started to speak out. I know that requires considerable courage and that has to be acknowledged. But it is clear that if there could be an appropriate description of this administration, put aside philosophical differences, the fact is that they reflect an ideology that really in many respects is outside of the traditional, mainstream of Republican principles. But the word that I would use to characterize it is that, yes, it is cronyism, but at a fundamental level it has been an administration that has been incompetent.

So this is a question of ability to govern. We know that they do not like government. They see government as a problem. They do not like to govern. So I guess it is understandable. They want to starve government. They want to limit it. And that is a valid argument.

But there are times in this country when you need government. You need a strong military. You need to be prepared to defend the homeland. You need the kind of programs that can be run forthrightly, honestly and effectively that give every American a chance; a chance for an education, a chance for housing, for health care.

I think that this is all part of what we become when we are born as American citizens. We are participants in a social compact that says we are individuals and we have individual liberties and we will always advocate for those liberties, we will fight for those freedoms. But, at the same time, we have mutual responsibilities to each other. That is the essence of our greatness.

But if you do not like government, if you do not see a role for government, then you do not do a very good job when it comes to governance.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. If the gentleman will yield further, I think the point really is that not only do they disrespect government, and if you disrespect something, it tends to not work appropriately, they see government as their little sandbox, and they see government as their opportunity to take care of their political contributors, to bolster their own political party.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Government, with all due respect, and I do not disagree, but what government is about, it is about representing the people.

□ 2245

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I understand.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, it was the Founders that created representa-

tive government. The Founders believed in government. The Constitution created the government. We should be proud of our government, because this government has served well the American people for better than two centuries. But they do not like to govern. They do not care about governance. They do not need government. They do not need student loans. They do not need Medicare. They certainly do not need Medicaid. They do not need the kind of services that government can provide, because they believe that America could be best served by a society where individuals go their own separate ways.

Well, there has to be a balance if we are going to have a strong country and a strong America.

Yes, we can be critical, we can be very critical of the administration, but let us understand too that Congress has earned its share of blame for the mistakes of this administration, for the incompetence of this administration. Every student of American Government knows that it is the responsibility of Congress to oversee the executive, to take a look at what government agencies are doing.

But this Congress, and maybe this is a by-product of having a single party control all aspects of government, and we can understand that. It is difficult to criticize a President of your own party. You are reluctant to do that. That is natural. But more and more of our friends on the other side of the aisle are speaking out, and more Republicans outside of this institution are speaking out.

But it is the responsibility of the majority to work with the minority, in this case Democrats, to exercise oversight, to take a look at what is wrong, what is going wrong in this country today, and they refuse to. They are afraid, because if they start to peel off the onion, they are going to find something very ugly. And as Joe Gallaway recently wrote, and he happens to be the senior military correspondent for the Knight Ridder news agencies, that when the time comes to point a finger, do not forget, and he is speaking about the war, those who people the marble Halls of the U.S. Congress whose first duties seem to be to protect the Republican Party and their President.

That is the problem. How many times have Members, senior Members of the minority requested investigations, inquiries, oversight hearings into real problems? We heard earlier, for example, from this side, people talking about the troops and the need, the need to respect our troops. Yet, it was the Democrats that started to question the Department of Defense about why our troops were not outfitted with body armor. Why were they being compelled to use Humvees that were not properly armored? It was Democrats, along with a few courageous Republicans who said, you know what, we are not adequately funding health care for veterans. We can wave

the flag and speak of patriotism and send these young men and women to Iraq, but when they come home, they are not going to have the kind of health care that they deserve.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I just want to chime in to let the gentleman from Massachusetts know, sir, that we can do better.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Together we can do better.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. That is the reason why the Democrats fought hard in the Budget Committee to make sure that the Medicare cuts did not take place or put an extra burden on seniors, to make sure that we replaced the burden that the majority side here in this House, the Republicans, have put on students as it relates to student aid and student loans. \$14 billion in fees for students. That means \$14 billion in fees and taxes for parents in America, for grandparents in America.

We can do better. I am so glad that we sleep with our fists balled up here ready to fight on behalf of Americans every day. That is the reason why I feel excited every time we get the opportunity to come to this floor to offer an amendment, to come to this floor here in this special order, to be able to let not only the majority side know, the Republican majority because, I must say, and I want to remind everyone, the Republicans are in control of this House, the Senate, and the White House. So anyone that has anything to say, and that includes Members, about how the Democrats said this and the Democrats said that and they are doing this, we are not doing anything as it relates to pulling this country in reverse.

I am going to tell my colleagues right now, what went down in the Budget Committee today is shameful; it is really shameful. I just want to, as we work here as a working group, I just want to say, I want to make sure that the majority side, when that budget comes to this floor, that they abide by the rules of the House of Representatives. If there is a 15-minute vote, then let it be a 15-minute vote. If there is a grace period, 17, 20 minutes, okay. But we do not want to be here on this floor watching the majority side, the Republican side, twist arms to get the votes to pass an unjust budget.

Now, we held up a report earlier that the Republicans called for \$35 billion in cuts for the very people they are trying to help, or they say they are trying to help; and then in the end game, it is \$50 billion in cuts. Not a mumbling word, not a mumbling word about billionaires and moving that tax cut away from billionaires, just some of it for the offset. Not a mumbling word, not a mumbling word to the oil industry that is dancing in the street and people around here are putting in \$5 and \$10 in their tank because they cannot afford to fill their tank up. It is not because they like going to gas stations; it is the fact that they cannot afford to fill their tank up. So it does not matter

what you are driving. You can be driving a small, compact car. \$5 is \$5, \$10 is \$10, \$20 is \$20. They cannot afford to fill up their gas tank because it costs so much, leave alone the fact that it is getting cold.

Mr. DELAHUNT. But the reality is, my friend, that they are taking good care of the oil companies. They are providing \$16.5 billion in subsidies to the oil companies that are breaking all kinds of records in terms of profits. I cited the example of ExxonMobil, but that is only one out of four or five. In one quarter, in 3 months, their net profit was \$10 billion.

Mr. Speaker, the truth is, and the facts are very clear, that the majority party, the Republicans in Congress, do believe in the welfare state. They are advocates of the welfare state, but it is restricted. It is restricted to a constituency, and that constituency is corporate America. Not small business America, not even mid-sized business, but the very largest corporations, whether they be pharmaceutical companies that they have given more than \$100 billion worth of taxpayers' money in subsidies, but also oil companies, at the same time when oil companies are breaking records.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, there is also another welfare state: Iraq. We have forgotten to even bring this up tonight, but there is a welfare state in Iraq. And as they are cutting programs in the United States on student loans, do we know what they are doing in Iraq? They rehabbed 2,717 schools in Iraq. They trained 36,000 teachers in Iraq. As they are cutting Medicaid and Medicare in the United States, they have trained 2,000 health educators in Iraq, 3.2 million children vaccinated in Iraq, 110 primary health care centers built in Iraq. We have a welfare state in Iraq right now that is being funded by the American taxpayer at the same time that the Republican Congress is cutting funding for the United States citizens that live right here in this country.

So they take your public tax dollars and they give \$16.5 billion of it to the oil companies, \$100 million of it to the pharmaceutical companies, do nothing to reduce the cost of pharmaceuticals; they give between \$200 billion and \$300 billion to the welfare state in Iraq and, at the same time, they are cutting programs here in the United States of America. That is just corrupt. They put their party before the country.

We want to take this country in a new direction, change what is going on in this country, and create some independence from shakedown street.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I have to tell my colleagues something about corruption. My colleagues have not seen anything yet.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, we talk in our 30-something Working Group here, I used to say every week; but now it's every night, about third-party validators, and I think it is im-

portant to have third-party validators so that we show the people who are hearing us tonight that this is not TIM RYAN's opinion or DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ's opinion or KENDRICK MEEK's opinion or BILL DELAHUNT's opinion; this opinion is shared by many, many others.

The Republican leadership here, they talk a good line about faith and values. In fact, they base almost their entire campaigns, the case they make to the country, about how we need to restore family values, we need to restore values and faith, and there should be more faith injected into every aspect of our government. Well, let us see what the people of faith, our faith leaders are saying about these budget cuts that we are going to be considering next week.

Today, there were leaders from various faiths that joined in prayer at the Capitol. Those leaders included Reverend Dr. Bob Edgar, who is the general secretary of the National Council of Churches; Reverend Jim Wallis, founder of Sojourners and Convener of Call to Renewal; Rabbi David Saperstein, director of the Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism; and Eleanor Giddings Ivory, director, Washington office, Presbyterian Church. They had a press conference before the prayer and they called for a moral budget and urged Congress to stop immoral budget priorities. Let me just outline a few of the things that they said.

Reverend Wallis said, "As this moral battle for the budget unfolds, I am calling on Members of Congress, some of whom make much out of their faith, to start some Bible studies before they cast votes to cut food stamps, Medicaid, child care and more that hurt the weakest in our Nation. Reverend Edgar of the National Council of Churches said, "We gather today just days after Rosa Parks, the mother of the civil rights movement, lie in State here in the Capitol rotunda. Even as we celebrate her life and the strong witness she had for justice, we recognize that justice is hanging in the balance as this proposed budget, if passed, would hurt those who are most in need in our society: children, the elderly, and those living in poverty."

I just want to quote from the remarks that Rabbi Saperstein made. He quoted the Bible and used the Bible's words to help our Republican colleagues understand the impact that they are making. He urges us to "deal thy bread to the hungry," not "steal thy bread from the hungry."

Remember Proverbs' stern warning: "Do not steal from the weak because he is weak and do not oppress the poor in the gate."

Listen to the voiceless and to the Biblical imperative: "Speak out for those who cannot speak for the rights of the destitute."

These are the third-party validators who are our religious leaders that are urging this Republican leadership not to go down this path, not to pull out

the rug and the floor and literally burn the house down that people who are so badly in need in this country cannot afford to sustain.

□ 2300

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I just wanted to tell you, they are not a Democratic club or an independent voters club or a Republican club. They are our religious leaders that are calling upon this Congress to recognize their responsibility.

I can tell you right now, you know, I am a Baptist. But I do not have a lot of time, you know, Christian, Baptist. But here is the issue. I just wanted to make sure that we know exactly what we are doing. We know what they are doing. We want to make sure that we illuminate what they are doing because, when it comes down to it, if the Republican majority in this House was doing such a great job, then why do only 35 percent of the American people feel that we are doing a good job?

Now if it is only 35 percent of the American people, just do the math. A super majority of Americans feel that we are not doing our job. Why do they feel that the President, why is the President at his lowest approval rating of his entire administration at 35? Why is DICK CHENEY's approval rating at 19?

So when folks start coming to the floor swelling all up and carrying on and saying, you know, we salute one flag, and anyone else that has anything to ask or say about it, they are with the other folks, with the terrorists, with the enemy, why are they coming here? Why are not they doing certain things?

But I just want to make this point on this issue. I just wanted to make sure that we understand that we live in a democracy, and that we have the very people that the majority side is cutting the programs that help them the most, Medicaid, Medicare, being able to protect our environment in a way that it should be protected.

Democrats, what we did we made sure that we put forth amendments that will help everyday Americans, that we will be able to achieve the goals that we are supposed to achieve as Members of Congress. We also pushed a philosophy of making sure that we bring the budget back in balance. We made sure that for every time that someone puts forth a program that we have a way to pay for it, not just saying we are going to run over to China and say we are going to get the money, or not to say that we are going to pay for it on the backs of everyday Americans as it relates to including a budget enforcement measure to protect Social Security.

That is another pot that the majority cannot help themselves of going into and raiding all the time. It was this working group, amongst many others, that fought off the majority on this side of the aisle. We had 500 plus town hall meetings, a number of editorials, a number of editorial board meetings to

make sure that we let America know what they were trying to do.

When I say they, I am talking about a Republican majority.

So, once again, I will close by saying this, that the Republicans are in control of this House by the majority, and in the Senate they have a majority, and the White House, they definitely have control of that. And the reason why I continue to say that is that I want to make sure that folks know that we are fighting a good fight here, but we need to make sure that the Republicans, Democrats, independents, those that are thinking about voting, registering to vote, get involved in this process.

Because I can tell you right now, I have some good friends that are Republicans, and they are very upset about what is going on right now. I have good friends that are Independents, and they make comments as it relates to what is happening here in this House.

But folks are saying, fiscal responsibility? Okay, you know I am a fiscal conservative because I say I am, not because of our acts.

This is a President that has not vetoed one spending bill. Not one. Not one.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I want to share with the American people something we shared with them earlier in the last hour or 2 hours ago about being fiscally responsible. In fact, in the last 224 years, 42 Presidents, they borrowed \$1 trillion from outside sources, other countries. Forty-two presidents, 224 years over a trillion dollars.

In the last 4 years, the Republican President with the Republican House and the Republican Senate have borrowed more than we have borrowed in the previous 224 years, over a trillion dollars from foreign countries, China, Japan, Saudi Arabia.

Here is the kicker. See, now they are the bank. Now China is the bank. Now they are already taking our jobs. Now they are holding the bank notes, and we got to pay interest on it.

Here is the kicker. Here is what just really frosts me. At the same time, China is graduating 600,000 engineers a year; and the United States is graduating 70,000. So what does the Republican majority do? After borrowing billions of dollars from the Chinese and watching them educate their kids and have 600,000 engineers when we only have 70,000, they raise the fees on student loans. They cut the education budget.

Then the kids who need health care, so that they can at least concentrate in school, so they are not sick, they cut that, too.

Where is the long-term vision from the Republican party?

Mr. DELAHUNT. If you think about it in terms of individuals and then extrapolate to nations, it is really easy to understand. We are borrowing a trillion dollars. Let us say we are borrowing, just for the sake of discussion

purposes, half of that from the Chinese Central Bank, the Communist Central Chinese Bank. As you indicate, they are educating some 600,000 engineers. How do they pay for that? Well, you know how they paid for part of it? The American taxpayer, Mr. Speaker. When they pay the interest on the debt to the Chinese, that allows the Chinese to fund the education of some 600,000 students in technical schools in China.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. So are you saying that the interest that the American taxpayer pays on the money we are borrowing from China is being invested on the Chinese people to create 600,000 engineers a year?

Mr. DELAHUNT. Well, we are paying for their education in China. We are paying for roads, 6,000 miles of roads in Iraq, 5,000 units of affordable housing, Mr. Speaker, in Iraq. We are paying for, you know, primary health care centers in Iraq; and you know what we are doing in the United States? We are cutting everything.

We built a beautiful dam, a magnificent dam, an absolute ultimate in terms of engineering to prevent flooding. And we are familiar now with floods. Clearly, the people in New Orleans, Mr. Speaker, are very, very familiar with floods. There was a problem with a levee in New Orleans in terms of the structural defects.

But the one that I am talking about, the dam that I am talking about, that engineering marvel that we built with taxpayer dollars, American taxpayer dollars, was not built in New Orleans. It was built in Mosul, Iraq.

Where are our priorities?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Our priorities, apparently the priorities of this administration are in appointing unqualified people to run Government agencies like Michael Brown, whose priorities clearly were more on what kind of shirt he was wearing, as opposed to making sure that the people in the gulf coast States who were about to get and then did get hit by Katrina did get taken care of. And about whether to roll up their shirtsleeves and by appointing their college roommates to jobs, to making sure that you have well-qualified people in the Government.

It does not stop at Michael Brown. You have people who have been found to be wholly unqualified up and down the Government. You have corruption, through and through, from the top. At the White House, the first person working in the White House in 130 years to be indicted in 130 years.

You know, we have had quite a few scandals in White Houses past just in my lifetime, but never once has a White House official, an administration official working in the White House been indicted before 130 years ago. That is where their priorities are.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. If I may, I mean, it is just not an indictment that someone ran out and took a plane and took a plane to go see a basketball game and flew back on some private

company or something. It is not that. It is not something that reflects on personal judgment.

No, this is outing, Mr. Speaker, a clandestine CIA agent. That individual that goes in, and guess what? Guess what the agent's job was? To help us in finding out those countries that have weapons of mass destruction. To harm who? The United States of America. And because she was out, and now, you know, I am hearing that in the White House they are saying that the defense is going to be, well, you know, I have a lot of conversations in a day. I did not quite remember talking to a reporter about a CIA agent.

I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, because if that is something that you can forget, the time that you outed a CIA agent, and you forget it. You are like, oh, well, you know, I got coffee. Then I walked over here. You know, you do not just out a CIA agent.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, it is really hard to keep track of all of the lies.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. You cannot violate national security when you have a security clearance, hello, that the four of us have. I said the other night, if I wanted to, you know, for political gain, talk about the things that I know as a Member of the Armed Services Committee, talk about the things that I know as a Member of the Homeland Security Committee for political gain, that would be horrible and a crime.

And it took place. You know, if it was just politics, I mean, people can understand. But someone could have lost their life. We do not know yet. And now her cover has been blown. A whole front that the CIA has has been blown. And those individuals that she has relationships with have been blown, all because some folks thought it would be good for political gain to be reelected to the White House.

Now I am going to tell you something right now, ladies and gentlemen, that we cannot allow this activity to continue.

As we started talking, I was handed a piece of paper here, because I was incorrect. The Congress approval rating is at 31. At 31. So anyone that wants to come to the floor chest-beating and patting yourself on the back, talking about I am doing a great job, let me tell you something on both sides of the aisle, we have to step it up on our own leadership. We have to step it up on our leadership, and we have to do it together on behalf of Americans. We have to do it together on behalf of Americans, not Democrats, not Republicans, not independents, not the special interests, not the folks that showed up at the fund-raiser last night.

We have got to make sure that we represent the United States of America and the people that pay taxes. We were Federalized when we were elected. So if folks feel, oh, well, I am here or here, and I do not need to worry about that, you are a Member of the United States

Congress. You are a Member of the 109th Congress, and you have a responsibility to lead.

If you do not want to lead, I am going to tell you something, as sure my name is Congressman MEEK, I feel that the American people, Democrat, Republican, Independent alike, and even going back to what the gentleman was talking about, 224 years of individuals that were fiscally responsible, the Whig Party, okay, these individuals will rise up to make sure that we protect our country.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Do you know why? Because the kids that have to pay this debt, that \$8 trillion, they are not just Republican kids, they are not just Democratic kids, they are kids born in the United States of America.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Do you know what the tragedy of this is? Let us put aside for a moment indictments and a discussion of who might be indicted in the future or misconduct that violates criminal statutes.

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What is truly unfortunate here is that we have reached a point where there is a culture that exists here in Washington where if there is disagreement, if there is dissent that it is described as unpatriotic.

We have heard that I think earlier this evening on the floor, the inference being that if there is any dissent or disagreement, somehow motives can be inferred that that courageous individual, in my judgment, who speaks out in opposition is somehow unpatriotic.

There was an interesting article or column just recently by Jim Hoagland in The Washington Post where he said, Mr. President, he wrote a letter to President Bush, he said, Mr. President, would it not have been easier if you had just wrote a letter to the editor in response to the opinion piece that was produced by Mr. WILSON? Would that not have been welcomed by the American people, by Members of Congress?

But what has happened is no, let us design a plan to impugn that individual's integrity. Let us try to destroy that individual. Let us try to discredit him or her. That is not what democracy is about. In fact, today I read the White House had prepared a series of talking points attacking the former National Security Advisor, Brent Scowcroft, who recently went public in saying that the policies of this Bush administration as it relates to Iraq and the Middle East are a failure. They were preparing, according to Mr. Hoagland's column, talking points to attack him. We have got to get away from this politics of destruction and ad hominem attacks and questioning individuals's patriotism. That is not what we are about.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that they do not appear to have any interest in that. Yet again, the cronyism and the culture of corruption continues because

one would think that after Brownie they would have learned, who is still on the payroll.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. \$148,000 a year. Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. \$148,000 a year. They may have learned and bring in additional people who are qualified. Yet, the President just picked the FDIC, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, chairman to run the gulf coast recovery. Let us peruse his qualification. He gave \$100,000 to President Bush's Presidential campaign.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Corruption. Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. He has 30 years' experience in the financial services industry.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Cronyism. Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. It does not stop.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Incompetence. Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Because they have no interest in it stopping.

We are approaching the end of our hour, and I want to yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) and ask him to give out our Web site.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. 30somethingdems@mail.house.gov.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. ETHERIDGE (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for November 2.

Miss MCMORRIS (at the request of Mr. BLUNT) for today on account of business in her district.

Mr. TIAHRT (at the request of Mr. BLUNT) for today on account of family obligations.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. STUPAK) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. SCHIFF, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. BROWN of Ohio, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. EMANUEL, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.
Mrs. MCCARTHY, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. STUPAK, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. MCDERMOTT, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. LEWIS of California, for 5 minutes, November 4.
Ms. HARRIS, for 5 minutes, today.

BILL PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Jeff Trandahl, Clerk of the House reports that on November 1, 2005, he presented to the President of the United