

is their version of a free market. Of course, again, they are generous campaign contributors so we can understand some of this rhetoric on their side of the aisle.

Nonetheless, an incredibly expensive, confusing plan which gives all of the benefit to the pharmaceutical and insurance industry, puts seniors at risk, puts taxpayers at risk, and we could have done so much better for so much less. It would cost nothing to negotiate those lower prices. The VA gets prices at a 70, 75 percent reduction from list price; but, no, the Republicans had a special provision in this bill.

Medicare, the default provider for anybody who cannot buy into an insurance plan that is red-lined by the insurance industry, and they can do that legally under this bill, they say, oh, we are not selling you a premium; you have got too many drug claims; we are not going to take you. But they can go to Medicare as a default provider, and guess what? Medicare is the only entity in the world, other than uninsured individuals, who will have to pay list price for drugs. Nobody can afford list price for drugs except the superwealthy and, according to Republicans, Medicare. This will bankrupt the program, but that is where the highest risk seniors, the ones that are not desirable to the industry, will get pushed after maybe 1 year of enrollment, if they are lucky enough to get enrolled in the first year.

So huge costs to taxpayers, confusion and risks for seniors, the end of Medicare in the not-too-distant future by bankruptcy, by design, by the Republicans, all to profit the private insurance industry and the pharmaceutical industry.

You should be really, really ashamed of this horrible product.

#### NATURAL GAS CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PETERSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to speak about an issue I have spoken about many times: the natural gas crisis that faces this country.

Yes, we just passed an energy bill, but it did little to help our homeowners heat their homes. We have had a 500 percent increase in natural gas prices in the last 5 years. A month ago, when we were still facing the impact of Katrina, we had a 700 percent gas increase when it reached \$14.50 when it had been \$2 just 5 years ago.

These natural gas prices, in my view, threaten homeownership, church ownership, schools, YMCAs, YWCAs, and small businesses.

In my districts, those kinds of organizations are renewing their gas contracts, and they are paying 100 percent more than they paid last year and many times more than they paid a couple of years ago.

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Industries like the fertilizer industry are being crushed by these natural gas prices because 70 percent of the cost of producing fertilizer is natural gas. Forty-four percent of our fertilizer companies are now offshore, and our farmers are paying two and three and four times as much for fertilizer as they did just several years ago.

The huge petrochemical industry that is dominated by America will not be for long because there are 20 chemical plants being built in the world and 19 are offshore. Why? Natural gas prices. Petrochemicals use gas not only as a fuel, but they use it as an ingredient for all the chemicals we buy every day. Polymers and plastics involved in everything we market today use natural gas as an ingredient and natural gas as a fuel. Forty to fifty percent of their costs are natural gas.

We have huge reserves in this country of natural gas. We are not poor on natural gas. Congress and Presidents have chosen to lock it up. Our Outer Continental Shelf, that is the first 200 miles offshore, is rich in natural gas.

We have a bill that we introduced today that will open up the Outer Continental Shelf. We increase States' rights from three miles to 20 miles so it will be all out of sight. There has never been a gas production well that has ever in any way soiled a beach. We need to unlock our natural gas supplies.

Canada, Belgium, Great Britain, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, New Zealand, and Australia produce most of their natural gas offshore, right off of their coastlines. They have beautiful beaches. They are not a threat. There has never been a gas production well that has ever in any way caused beach problems.

I urge Members of this body to deal with this natural gas crisis. We have to open up some supply or we are going to lose major industries. A million or more jobs will be gone in the next 2 or 3 years, some of the best blue collar jobs we have left in this country.

We cannot just subsidize people with natural gas prices. We need to bring prices down by increasing supply because we have lots of it. We have lots of it in the Midwest. But on the Outer Continental Shelf on our coastlines, it is right close to our population centers, it is right close to our plants and our manufacturers.

We will not make steel in this country in the years ahead if we continue. We will not make aluminum in this country. We will not produce anything that uses natural gas to melt it, to bend it, to twist it, to treat it because we cannot afford it. Europe pays half as much for natural gas as we do. China, Taiwan, and Japan are big competitors economically and pay a third of what we pay for natural gas. The rest of the world pays less than \$2.

It is time to get our heads out of the sand. It is time to open up our natural gas reserves in this country and pass

House bill 4318, which would open up huge reserves on our shorelines to produce natural gas in this country so we can compete and have jobs for our working people.

#### PAYING TRIBUTE TO ED ROYBAL

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to join my colleagues in paying tribute to our former colleague and friend, Congressman Ed Roybal.

Many people who are in Congress now did not have the privilege of serving with him. They serve with his very distinguished daughter, Congresswoman LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD, but the legacy lives on. I wish everyone in this Congress could have seen the outpouring of love and support and devotion to Ed Roybal at his magnificent funeral at the Catholic Cathedral in Los Angeles. We know how respected Ed Roybal is in this body. It was wonderful to see the love of the people he was closest to in California. Many of us went there, and we told his many friends and his family and those close to him of the respect in which he was held here.

Mr. Speaker, I knew Ed Roybal very well for many years. I was a big fan of his when he was doing work with the farm workers organizing in California. He was a legend in our State. And then he continued his leadership for our country in the Congress of the United States.

When I was first named to the Appropriations Committee, Ed Roybal was my chairman. We were in the majority at the time. He was my chairman on the Treasury Postal Subcommittee. So, on a daily basis, I saw firsthand his command of the policy, of the issues, the power of his advocacy and his determination to help all Americans.

Ed Roybal had no time for government of the few. He was about the many. When others in Washington turned their backs on seniors, the disadvantaged, and the poor, Ed Roybal was there. He was the first Member of Congress to appropriate funds for HIV/AIDS, and that sounds very remarkable and commendable now. It was very courageous at the time. He then was a leader. He fought the good fight with courage. He had a special grace about him and a dignity and a twinkle in his eye.

In recognition of his leadership on public health, the Campus of the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta was named in his honor. Ed Roybal probably has more buildings in California named for him than any other politician ever in California. But at the CDC,