

GEORGIA: AMERICA'S PROVEN
ALLY

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, this week the House Democracy Assistance Commission, led by Chairman David Dreier, is hosting parliamentarians and staff from five emerging democracies.

Last week, I welcomed the delegation from the Republic of Georgia, led by M.P. Nino Nakashidze, vice chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. The delegation toured the Midlands of South Carolina, visiting the State House, the University of South Carolina, top international businesses, Fort Jackson, the Lexington Rotary Club and the Batesburg-Leesville Chamber of Commerce, coordinated by special assistants Walt Cartin and Jonathan Black.

It is inspiring to meet fellow colleagues such as Georgia's, whose country has evolved from a repressed Soviet Republic to a vibrant democracy, promoting freedom with troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Republic of Georgia is an appreciated new ally of America, participating in the greatest spread of democracy in the history of the world.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11.

GAS PRICES AND THE NEED FOR
LOBBYING REFORM

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Madam Speaker, yesterday President Bush said record oil prices and large cash flows also mean that these companies don't need unnecessary tax breaks. How does the President think that these oil companies got the tax breaks in the first place? A Republican Congress of course.

Energy companies spent \$86 million lobbying Congress last year, and in return the Republican Congress gave them \$14.5 billion of hard-earned money by the taxpayers. You can't get a return like that on Wall Street. Before the President signed the energy bill of June 6, 2005, energy was \$2.09 a gallon. Today it is \$3.30 in my district.

The debate about lobbying reform is a debate about a \$14.5 billion taxpayer giveaway to Exxon, Chevron and ConocoPhillips. But what this Congress is going to vote on tomorrow is not lobbying reform. To quote The Washington Post, it is a sham. To quote The New York Times, it is a laughing stock. You could say the same and use the same adjective to describe the energy bill.

Remember, it all started with the Vice President behind closed doors meeting with energy executives. They weren't exactly playing Scrabble or gin rummy back there. Madam Speaker, the Republican bill isn't reform, it is

just another sign that the people's House is still for sale.

ROBBER BARON BUREAUCRATS

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

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, as this Victims Rights Month of April comes to an end, the bureaucrats are also trying to end a fund that supports victims of America. The Victims of Crime Act requires convicted criminals to put money into a fund that then pays for crime victim services.

What a great idea: make criminals pay for the system that they have created. Make them pay rent on the courthouse. This fund is about \$1.6 billion. This is not Federal money, this is not taxpayer money, this is victim money.

Now the robber baron bureaucrats want to take this money and put it into the abyss of the Federal Treasury. As one of the members of the Victims Rights Caucus, along with Jim Costa and Katherine Harris, we do not want the government to victimize victims again.

This money belongs to thousands of victims and thousands of victims organizations, including domestic violence shelters, rape centers, child abuse centers, and should not be taken away. Congress needs to prevent this stealth stealing of victims' money, and we must demonstrate to America that criminals will pay and be accountable for the misdeeds against the American people.

And that's just the way it is.

HONORING THE LIFE OF RICHARD
KOHNSTAMM

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, last week Oregonians were saddened by the sudden death of Richard "Dick" Kohnstamm.

He was a visionary leader who conceived and then for half a century led the Kohnstamm family crusade to restore the jewel that is Timberline Lodge. This historic structure, a Depression-era public works project on Oregon's majestic Mt. Hood, is today an artistic and historic treasure.

Dick was not just a leader in alpine sports, an innovator in year-round skiing, but also a force in recreation and tourism at the national level as well. His passions ranged from historic preservation to, notably, public broadcasting leadership. He was a pioneer in creative ways to fashion public and private partnerships before the buzz word became popular.

He will be sorely missed but leaves a vision, a committed family, and a State that is grateful for over half a century of leadership.

EXTENSION OF ALTERNATIVE
MINIMUM TAX

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

Mrs. KELLY. Madam Speaker, millions of Americans filed their income tax returns last week.

The tax relief measures we have passed in Congress during the past 5 years have helped drive down the Federal tax bill of all Americans, but more work needs to be done to enable our constituents to keep more of the money they earn, rather than sending it here to Washington in taxes.

This year, we have got to get the alternative minimum tax off the backs of small business and the middle-class families once and for all.

It was a tax increase in 1993 that failed to adjust the AMT exemption amounts for inflation. That negligence left us with a stealth tax that is looming at the doorstep of middle-class families throughout New York and across our country.

We protected those middle-class families by increasing the AMT exemption amounts in tax relief we enacted during the past few years, but if middle-class exemptions are not extended or made permanent this year, the number of New Yorkers forced to pay the AMT will more than quadruple to 1.6 million next year, and this is just New York.

Let us not repeat the mistake Congress made in 1993. Let us stop the alternative minimum tax on the middle class and on America's small businesses. Let us commit ourselves to lowering taxes, not raising them.

EXCESSIVE OIL COMPANY
PROFITS

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, Congress must break the hold which the oil companies have on the politics of our country.

The American people are demanding action. The price of gasoline has climbed to over \$3 a gallon, headed towards \$4, maybe \$5 a gallon. But listen to this: since 2001, the five largest oil companies have made over \$280 billion in profits. ExxonMobil alone made \$36 billion in profits last year.

There is only one way to stop the oil companies from an endless series of increases in the price of gasoline.

Nearly 50 Members of Congress have now signed on to my bill, H.R. 2070, which calls for a 100 percent excess profits tax on the oil company profiteering. This act does not tax the price of gasoline so it will not increase the cost. However, by taxing excessive profits, it puts the breaks on price gouging and will lower the price of gasoline.

Congress must not stand by while the oil companies are stealing from the American people.