problem. I would like for both sides of the aisle to sit down and say, let's work this thing out intelligently. And I will give you just one example, a couple examples not being addressed. One right now, there is a tremendous backlog on background investigations of people who are coming and have come into this country illegally to get their visas extended. They have to have a background check or to get into this country with a background check. That thing could take anywhere from 18 months and the backlog just once they start processing it, it can take up to 18 months or longer.

Right now in my part of Texas, our San Antonio office is working on the years 1998, 1999 and 2000. We are going to take that system in its present condition and dump 15 million-plus people into that system for background checks? Or do they get to miss that part that the legal immigrants have to take?

Health exams have to be done for everyone that comes in the United States. What are we going to do to examine the health of 15 million people in this country to make sure that there are not communicable diseases in this country? This is an issue that is part of our law. It is required by law. If we are going to process them, that needs to be here.

Then a question I do not hear anybody addressing is what do we do to the people who do not join our program? We love America and we think everybody comes here to be an American citizen. But I can tell you from personal conversations with people who have come here, I have worked building fences side by side with folks that, I never asked them, but since they did not speak any English and they told me they were from Mexico, I kind of figured they were illegal aliens. I can tell you, they didn't come here to be American citizens. They came here to work. And their families were back in Mexico, and they really wanted to go back there. And they sent 80 percent of their paycheck home because they were able to live on social services over here so they can afford to do that.

Now, what about the guy who says, well, that is great, but I do not want to pay back taxes and I do not want to pay a $200 fine, and I do not want to get a health check, and I do not want to get a background check; I will just stay in the shadows. Are we addressing that issue? Are there going to be consequences to those people who continue to stay in the shadows? If you care about the people that come in here, do we want anybody in this country starting their life on American soil under the cloud of criminal behavior?

But we know that 15 million people crossed our borders and broke the law. I did not say felony. I did not give a classification. I said broke the law. We have laws in this country, and it was broken. Let's be intelligent. Let's be smart. Let's seal the borders, put our resources there and then study this program and get a system that we can administer and we can work and we can pay for.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUHL of New York). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) is recognized until midnight as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, once again we are coming to the floor of the House of Representatives representing the 30-something Working Group. My co-chair will be here shortly, Congressman KENDRICK MEEK from Florida. And we want to thank our minority leader, Ms. PELOSI, and Mr. HOYER and Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. JOHN LARSON, our vice chair of our caucus, for allowing us the opportunity to come down here and speak not only on behalf of our caucus but on behalf of what we feel to be the opinion of many of those folks out in the country that are facing some of the challenges that have come from the legislation, that has come out of this Chamber, and has in many ways burdened them and their families because of the lack of leadership, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, that has been coming out of this Chamber and out of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

Www.HouseDemocrats.gov/30-Something for those Members and loyal fans who would want to drop us an e-mail about their opinion of what we are saying here, an opinion of what is going on in the government.

I would like to start off today talking a little bit about unfairness and lack of investment in the future of the United States of America. This is a chart that is the Republican tax plan, an overview. And this overview will show you who is benefiting most from the tax cuts that the Republican majority has passed over and over and over again; and how this tax cut has disproportionately favored those people who make more than a million dollars a year.

Now, I think it is important, Mr. Speaker, for all of us to understand at this juncture that we do not have any money to give back in the form of tax cuts. We are borrowing $500 billion a year from the Chinese Government, from the Japanese government, from the OPEC countries, and borrowing that money and giving it back to the wealthiest people in our country in the form of tax cuts for millionaires, $16 billion in corporate welfare for the energy companies, primarily the oil companies.

So when you go to the gas pump, Mr. Speaker, and you ask yourself why is gas so high and the oil company profits so high and then you actually think about public tax dollars going to subsidize the oil industry, that really gets your goat. So not only are your gas taxes high, your gas prices are high, but the public tax dollars that you send down here instead of going into education, instead of going into health care, instead of going into broadband service for all of the citizens in the country, instead of going to clinics, instead of going into all of these art programs and sports programs across the country, Mr. Speaker, the American tax dollar is going to subsidize the most profitable industry in the entire country. $16 billion is going from the pockets of hardworking Americans all over the country to the oil companies.

□ 2315

It is that simple, Mr. Speaker. It is that simple, and what we want to talk about tonight is how a Democratic majority in this House will begin to reform and transform these horrendous decisions that have been made and get our country going in a direction that is going to benefit all.

We will ask, as Democrats, everyone to contribute and we will ask and demand that everyone benefits from those basic contributions. We are going to challenge this country to move forward in a direction that is going to benefit everybody, and the days of we are going to take the public tax dollars and we are going to give them to this special interest group that is in the oil industry and we are going to let them move forward, those days are going to be over as of January 3, 2007.

We need a government, we need a Congress, we need an executive branch that is dynamic, that is mobile, that is agile, that can move in the context of an information economy. As businesses are going down the road, government is holding them back because we are not investing in our workers. We are not investing in education. We are not investing in making sure people are healthy.

To just illustrate how terrible the decisions have been, when you look at all the problems in our country, when you look at college tuition costs doubling, when you look at health care costs going up by 10, 15, 20 percent a year, when you look at the lack of investment into K–12 and the unfunded mandates from No Child Left Behind, when you look at all this and then you have the backdrop of what the Republican Congress is doing night in and night out in the United States Congress, this chart is the Republican tax plan.

Now, I know my friend Mr. MEEK, we are probably two of the more conservative Democrat Members. I am the most conservative Democrat Member in the Ohio delegation. Now, we would love to go to all of our constituents and say you all get a tax cut; this is going to be great. It would be good for us politically to be able to say that. Look what the Republicans are doing.

This big yellow bar here is what a millionaire got in the 2006 tax reconciliation bill. They will get $42,000 back. A millionaire will get $42,000 back. If you make $500,000, you will get $4,500 back. If you make $200,000, you will get $1,395 back, and then if you make $100,000 you will get $400 back. If you make $40,000, you will get $17 back.

Is this not disproportionate? If those people who say, Mr. Speaker, well, the millionaire pays more in tax, we do not have the money to give these people to begin with. We are borrowing the $42,000 from China to give the millionaire a tax break. We do not have money to give anybody, let alone the wealthiest people in the country, give them $42,000 back. We are borrowing the money, Mr. Speaker. We are borrowing money from China to give a millionaire $42,000 back.

Now, if you think that is good public policy, then you need to make sure that you vote for your Republican Member of Congress because this policy will continue. Guess what, in 10 years your kids are going to have a big bill that is going to come in the mail to them that they are going to have to pay the taxes, the debt, the deficit, the bill to the Chinese Government, to the Japanese government, to the OPEC countries, that the money went to pay a millionaire $42,000 back.

Those people who think that this money, the $42,000 that a millionaire gets back, is going to somehow get invested back into the American economy, they have not been around for the last 15 or 20 years because this millionaire is taking their $42,000, Mr. Speaker, and they are putting that in an international fund that is going to yield good returns. They are going to invest that money in a stock that is going to invest in a business in China, in Asia. That is what is going to happen. Where is the benefit to the American people?

All we are saying is that we need to begin to invest in the common good. Everybody contributes, everybody benefits.

I would love to go tell this person, and I do not know many people like this made more than $1 million last year. I am from Youngstown, Ohio. Niles, Ohio and Akron, Ohio, is the district I represent. I would think that we would have the courage to ask this person to please pay their fair share, that they are getting a tax cut of $42,000 and we have got to borrow it from China, do you still want it? We are giving $16 billion to the oil companies. Please, someone in leadership in the United States Government, in the Republican party who controls the House, the Senate and the White House, somebody in the Republican party call in Lee Raymond, call in one of these CEOs from one of the oil companies and just say to them, we do not have $16 billion to give you in corporate welfare, I am sorry. I know we may have had a deal before the election, but you know what, I am sorry, and we do not have that money now for you, and we have to invest that money in the broadband access for everyone in the country; we have got to invest that money into reducing the costs of college education; we have got to invest that money into increasing the health and welfare of the general public; we have got to fund No Child Left Behind; we need more engineers and scientists; we need 3 million health care workers in the next decade or so. We need 1 million nurses in the next decade or so.

I would be happy to yield to my friend Mr. MEEK.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it has just been truly a pleasure watching you share not only with the Members, Mr. Speaker, but also with the American people, and we wonder how we got to where we are now. I am just wondering how did we got to where we are now?

Mr. Speaker, I think we have gotten there because of this rubber stamp that is here. It is not just a rubber stamp. It is the Republican Congress rubber stamp, and it is very, very unfortunate that the people that are paying the price for this rubber stamp are the American people at the gas pump. This is graduation time. A lot of parents are going to see their children walk across the stage, but guess what, college assistance and affordable loans will not be there for those children because we are willing to give $42,000, $43,000 in tax breaks to millionaires.

The Republican Congress says they gave tax cuts for the American people. Yes, they are American people, too, but I am not talking about the middle class. The middle class family does not consider themselves millionaires.

I am holding this rubber stamp because this is what got us here. Mr. RYAN talks about paying for that. Let us put that rubber stamp over here.

How we are paying for it is we are making history in all the wrong places: 224 years, $1.01 trillion borrowed, Mr. Speaker, over 224-year, 42 Presidents combined, $1.01 trillion. The Republican Congress and President Bush, he could not do it without the Republican Congress, has been able to borrow $1.05 trillion over just 4 years. 224 years versus 4 years, even though we are at war, even though we have little health care for Americans, if any, and Mr. Speaker, we have given out tax breaks to the oil companies.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. So you are saying that that money that we are borrowing could pay for tax cuts.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. And the special giveaways and special interests.

Let me just quickly, I just want to make the point here. Oil companies, look at the subsidies and look at the profits. They have reaped $113 billion in record breaking profits in 2005; 2004, $84 billion; 2003, $59 billion; 2002, $34 billion. It is coincidental, Mr. Speaker, that after the meeting at the White House with the oil companies, that was uncovered, after they denied all of this, that they were a part of the working group, that the profit level went up.

Now, I am not just a Member with a conspiracy theory, but just the other day in the Democratic Caucus, we had a gentleman that came to speak to us about alternative fuel sources. The question was asked, well, is not the oil companies, I mean, they have commercials going on talking about how they are investing in alternative fuels. This is an actual shot of a pump at an ExxonMobil station. Here you have regular, you have special and then you have super plus.

But this is the interesting part, Mr. Speaker, because this is the ethanol part here that says E–85 which is an alternative fuel. Guess what is happening here. This sign here, and I hope that, Mr. Speaker, the Members can see it. You cannot use your Mobil credit card.

So basically what they are saying is that you can use your credit card for the gas because we want to keep you on this stuff, but if you get a vehicle with alternative fuels, even though you are a customer of ours, you cannot use our card for that fuel. Now, I guarantee you I can walk into the little food mart here at that ExxonMobil and buy a case of sodas if I wanted to with my ExxonMobil card. Someone who is a smoker can buy eight packs of cigarettes.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Sunflower seeds.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Sunflower seeds, what have you, but we cannot buy alternative fuels.

Now, meanwhile, back at the ranch, I see the ExxonMobil CEO on The Today Show, and he is saying, oh, we believe in innovation and alternative fuels, but that is not what it is saying at the pump, Mr. Speaker.

So I think that when we start looking at what is wrong with the Republican majority and what we are willing to do, if the American people sees fit to put Democrats in control of this House, that we will fight the big oil companies. We will make sure that there is no price gouging. It will not be a question of having to appoint a group to go out and look at this issue. They will no longer have the kind of open access special interests has had in this House and that is a fact. That is not fiction; that is fact.

So I think it is important when you start looking at all the money that is being borrowed to fund the millionaire tax break, all the money that is being borrowed to make sure that special interests get their tax cut and their subsidies and all these things, meanwhile the American people are paying for it.

I am not going to pull this stuff off the chart tonight, but these are the countries that are owning a part of the American apple pie due to the fact they want to have the great American giveaway.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I just want to make one point as you were talking about the oil companies. They have really become, and I do not say this in a derogatory way, they have become dinosaurs, and the Republican majority has just consistently reaffirmed their prehistoric nature because we are in a new economy. We are in a knowledge-based economy. We are in an economy that can figure out how to not use fossil fuels, how to figure out how to use different things. They run the gamut.

Let us invest in those things and figure out a way that we are not so dependent on the CEOs who are making $400 million, God bless them, retirement package of $2 million tax break, God bless you, but not at the expense of everyone else.

The dinosaur approach no longer works. We cannot have a government that just consistently lives in an age that no longer exists.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ), my friend.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I have been listening to both of you banter back and forth about gas prices, and what I hear in both of your voices is your desire to get to the core of what we obviously are all baffled about which is why. I mean, why over the last 15 to 20 years has there not been an effort, and let us say in the last dozen years, has there not been an effort to make a real commitment to fix this, to head this off at the pass, to make sure that our constituents are not consistently having to pay, for the foreseeable future, if not forever, more than $3 a gallon for gas?

I guess because I am the newest among the three of us I have reached the conclusion that obviously the Republicans do not have the joints that they need on the side of their neck because their heads do not appear to go this way. They only go this way, like this bobblehead elephant. Apparently, they only know how to say yes, Mr. Speaker; yes, Mr. President; yes, CEO of oil companies; I am happy to do your bidding in whatever it is that you like.

□ 2330

Their necks, unlike ours, don't appear to go horizontal, or side to side. Because if they did, then their voting record would reflect ours and the values of the American people a lot more closely, and they would not have voted in favor of the energy bill they put forward last summer, when they held the vote open for 40 straight minutes to ensure they could twist enough arms to get the bill to pass and give away the subsidies and the oil leasing rights that we own as a United States Government. And instead of collecting the royalties from the oil companies, we gave them away and allowed them to drill essentially for free, or to drastically reduce the rate.

That action and the lack of a commitment to funding alternative energy research and the cozy relationship that the Bush administration has with the Saudis and with the OPEC leaders, that is what has caused us to be in the mess that we are in. And you don't see any commitment on the part of the Republican leadership here to make any significant change.

The only place you see an effort to make a significant change and take this country in a new direction on oil prices and gas prices is through the Democratic agenda, the innovation agenda, where we pledged, when we rolled out our innovation agenda under Leader PELOSI's leadership, to become energy independent within 10 years. And that is possible through the use of ethanol.

I just saw the gentleman who made that presentation to our caucus on CNN the other night for a solid hour, and he literally outlined how it was possible for us to begin to make a commitment in agriculture through corn, which we are already doing in the Midwest, in your area, Mr. RYAN, but also it could be done in my area with sugar cane, in Louisiana and in the mid northwest with sugar beets. I mean, it is possible for us to really make an effort to invest in ethanol.

Brazil did it. Brazil is now completely independent of foreign oil. They manufacture vehicles that run on ethanol. They have hybrid and ethanol-only automobiles. That is something that is entirely possible in this country within 10 years. Unfortunately, the heads of the Members on this side of the aisle only go one way.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And the distinction is quite clear. We want to do broadband access to every household, we want to be energy independent in a decade, we want to fund research and development, and we want to have a tax credit for venture capitalists to come in and pump money into those industries. The Republican majority wants to give the oil companies $16 billion. It is that simple.

Put us in charge and we will have an energy independent Nation in 10 years, period. Let's get the country going in that direction, Mr. MEEK. And like Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ said, we can use sugar cane, we can use ethanol, we can use biodiesel, and we can use wind. We can use all these things. And nuclear. We could piece this thing together, but there's got to be a commitment to say why do we have all our eggs in one basket right now.

And then you look at the problems in the Middle East and all the rest that we have.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. And I actually should have mentioned something else. You are a Midwesterner, but we have coastlines in both of our districts in Florida, and obviously the United States is surrounded by coastline. What was the answer to our long-term and short-term energy needs that the Republicans put forward the other day? I mean, fortunately, we pieced together enough Members to defeat it, but that was to bring oil drilling and natural gas drilling within three miles of the coast of this country.

And it is understandable that a lot of our Midwestern colleagues voted to do that, because they are desperate to make sure that something happens and there is some movement on this. But had our Republican colleagues had a little foresight, had they actually had any interest in not, for lack of a better term, no, I won't use that expression, had they had any interest in not continuing to give significant assistance to the oil industry, then they would have not needed to make that short-term, shortsighted last-ditch effort solution to prevent minivan moms like me from having to pay $55 in filling up their gas tanks, which is what I just did the other day when I was driving my kids around.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. The American people expect us to come here and come up with solutions; to be creative and figure out how do we fix the problem, not to subsidize with the public tax money the very problem that we are having. We are making the problem worse.

Not only are we giving the oil companies more money, but we could have cut a deal with them. We could say to the oil companies, you are in on it. Make money off it. Hire people, do ethanol. You are in. Make money. Make lots of money. But don't do it at the expense that we are having now, the expense of the American people.

I think when you look at our agenda, when you take a real look, and this isn't about, Mr. Speaker, being on Fox News or MSNBC and two people screaming at each other about who is this and who is that. It is not about that. These are real solutions. And anybody who is watching this debate or this discussion here, this is about what we have in store for the American people. These are our plans: broadband for every household, energy independence in the next 10 years.

Go to our Web site, www.housedemocrats.gov/30something. Go to our Web site, see these charts, and look at us. We want to open this government up. Look at our plan. Examine it; you will like it. It is futuristic. It is about what the country is going to look like in 10 years.

I yield to my friend.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, it is just not natural to think that the oil industry, the CEOs, the board members of the oil industry will say, well, we want to do the right thing. Matter of fact, we are going to take money out of our pockets and profits and we are going to put it on the table and we are going to make America energy independent.

It goes against financial logic for them. Their stockholders now are making more money than they have ever made in the history of the country. When they have their shareholder meetings, Mr. Speaker, they do not go there and say, boy, people are paying a lot of money at the pump. What should we do? What should we do? No. We are making more money than we have ever made in our lives, and we are being subsidized by the Republican majority in Congress. What can we do to keep the Republican majority in control of the Congress so we can continue getting what we are getting? That is what is happening.

What has to happen on behalf of the American people, they have to have a Congress that is willing to say, you

know, that is not going to happen any more. We are going to make sure we work very hard so we can start stroking away from this kind of business here. Folks are talking out of both sides of their mouths saying that, oh, we believe in innovation and in alternative fuels, yet at the same time denying their customers the right to use their credit card to buy ethanol.

This is on a pump. This is on the pump. This is on the pump. This is not something that some environmental group ran out and put a sticker on a pump. You can pull up to an ExxonMobil station now and see that on the pump. That is very unfortunate, Mr. Speaker. It is not natural for that to happen.

It is not natural for the Republican majority to say, well, Mr. President, we don't agree with your tax policy because its wrong that we are borrowing money from foreign nations and we are selling America way. It is not natural. It is not natural for the Republican majority to say we have to have oversight. We have to make sure that we have no more Hurricane Katrinas.

Yes, there were some committees that met and found out the obvious, that things went wrong. But there were no solutions that came out of the report of the partisan committee here in the House.

It is not natural for the Republican majority to stand up to companies that are raking in record profits off the backs of the American people. This is well documented. And, Mr. Speaker, I am not even going to beg the Republican majority to do the right thing at this point, because history doesn't reflect that they are willing to be bipartisan in a way that will benefit all Americans, with making sure we work in a bipartisan way.

One thing our leadership has said and one thing we have embraced here in the 30-something Group is that when the American people see fit, hopefully in November, if they are willing to have a Democratic Congress to stand up to this White House and to stand up to the special interests here in Washington, D.C., then we will have bipartisanship. Because bipartisanship can only happen when the leadership allows it. I am saying the leadership in charge allows bipartisanship.

Mr. Speaker, well documented. There are conference committees when we pass a bill in the House and the Senate that comes together and the Democratic members are not even welcome to the conference committee to sit and talk about the ideas and exchange with the Senate so we can send a positive package to the President of the United States. That is not happening.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, as I close, and then I am going to be quiet, because I just want to make this last little point.

It is unfortunate that it is not natural for the Republican majority to do the right thing. I don't care if you are a Republican or an Independent or a Democrat, or you are thinking about voting and you are 17½ years old and you can register and vote in November, you have to have a problem. Or 17 and about to vote in November, because you have to be 18. You have to have a problem the way the Republican majority has put this country in a bad posture for the future and the present.

If I don't say anything else tonight, I just want to make sure that the Members understand what they are doing to the country. Not to Democrats. We are all in this. When we go to the pumps, they don't have a price for Democrats and a price for Republicans and a price for Independents. We are all paying the same price. We are all paying the same price at the pump.

So when folks pass policy and say, oh, well, we got what we wanted. It is not about carrying the Republican leadership on your shoulder saying we beat the Democrats on this one. No, you beat the American people, and the American people have had enough of it.

We are here to make it abundantly clear, and we are carrying a message on behalf of all our colleagues on this side of the aisle, and hopefully a few Republicans on that sides of the aisle, that we are willing to lead on behalf of the American people and not K Street, not the special interests, not somebody's cousin that happened to get a lobbying job that came here to get the right policy here, like they did in the White House on these oil companies.

Am I upset? You're doggone right I am upset. So I just want to make sure that we are clear on that, crystal; that everyone understands and we break this down so that the average Joe and Sue and Sally can understand what we are talking about here.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. You know, what we always try to do here on the 30-something time is to help people understand that we are not just offering our own opinions. And I think it would be helpful to illuminate for folks and for the Members, Mr. Speaker, just exactly what has gone down here in this Chamber and the opportunities that the Republicans have literally just cast aside.

Let us take a walk down the energy memory lane in the last several months, just since I have been here. Ninety-eight percent of House Republicans voted to let the oil companies keep their exorbitant profits. This was the week of April 28. The vote was on April 27, excuse me. And what they did was, the House Republicans rejected a Democratic effort to accept Senate provisions in the tax bill that would have removed $5 billion worth of subsidies and tax loopholes for large oil companies.

In other words, they would have removed the subsidies and tax loopholes worth $5 billion to oil companies, but House Republicans refused to do that. Ninety-eight percent of them voted to do that. Again, I don't think your rubber stamp is big enough, Mr. MEEK.

Let's talk about price gouging. It is really interesting. Before I came here, I was at home for a little while and I was watching CNN and saw a Senate colleague, to stay within the House rules, commenting at a hearing on oil prices. This was a Senate Republican, and he was using very tough talk and grilling the oil companies that were before him. Essentially, the announcer, the commentator on CNN, was talking about how this particular individual had previously never been in favor of legislation and had voted against every opportunity to rein in the oil industry and to try to bring some sanity to the direction that we are moving in terms of our energy policy.

But literally I watched him say it, he said to the oil industry representative that the American people were getting a little bit cranky and tired of this, and that he was getting ready to do something serious. What, I don't know, but if we have reached the point where even someone who has never voted to regulate the oil and gas industry is considering doing that, then you know that the American people have reached their breaking point.

Because in terms of price gouging, it has been a totally different story. The Republican leadership in either 57chamber has never supported adopting price gouging legislation.

□ 2345

In September 2005, Democrats proposed legislation to establish a Federal ban, this was a Democratic proposal, a Federal ban on price gouging for oil, gasoline and other petroleum products during national emergencies; provide civil and criminal penalties for price gouging; ban market manipulation; and require greater transparency in oil and gasoline markets.

This was supported by a majority in the Senate, but it was blocked by Republicans in the House. And that vote took place on November 17, 2005.

So there has never been an interest. In fact, there has been a specific interest in continuing to prop up the oil company profits. We have third-party validator after third-party validator that back this up, so this is not the DEBBIE, TIM and KENDRICK show where we are spewing our opinions. There are facts to back up the things we are saying. We are hopeful that the American people understand who is for true energy independence and moving this country in the right direction and who is just kidding.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I thank the gentlewoman because not only did you have third-party validators, I think we have some of the most important third-party validators to what we are saying here.

The next five posters are strong, conservative Republicans with credentials in the conservative community well beyond anything we will ever have.

This is Pat Toomey, former Member of Congress, president of Club for Growth. He says in the Philadelphia Inquirer on May 8: Republicans have

abandoned the principles of limited government and fiscal discipline. He went on to say: There is a very high level of frustration and disappointment among rank-and-file Republicans when they see a Republican-controlled Congress engaging in an obscene level of wasteful spending.

This next quote is from a guy who gave birth to the Republican revolution in 1994. He said, at the end of March, a congressional watchdog agency recently smuggled a truck carrying nuclear material into the country to test security; he said: Why isn't the President pounding on the table? Why isn't he sending in 16 reform bills?

Mr. Gingrich went on to cite a series of blunders under Republican rule, from failures in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina to mismanagement of the war in Iraq. He said the government has squandered billions of dollars in Iraq. That is from Newt Gingrich, former Speaker, conservative Republican.

He went on to say in the same article: They are seen, the Republicans, and as my good friend from Florida loves to point out, the man who gave birth to the Republican revolution, is now calling the Republican majority they; they are seen by the country as being in charge of a government that cannot function.

This is not the Democratic Party saying this; these are conservative Republicans who had some ideals that see this Republican Congress unable to govern the country.

Pick an issue. The war, down.

Pick an issue. The prescription drug bill, not working.

Pick an issue. Hurricane Katrina, FEMA, not working.

Education costs, through the roof.

You are in charge. You are in charge of the House and the Senate and the White House.

Pick an issue. Pick an issue in this country, oil prices, gas prices, energy costs, health care costs.

Pick an issue. Unable to govern. Unable to govern. And it is not my opinion; it is not your opinion. This is their people saying they do not know how to govern.

We want an opportunity. Then we find out, Tuesday, 26.5 million veterans' information is stolen. You cannot consistently run down government and then expect it to work.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. You know why it is breaking down, because special interests have been allowed to infiltrate the U.S. House of Representatives. The K Street Project until denounced a few months ago was alive and well in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker, you know it. I know it. The majority and minority know it. Articles were written, you have to be a part of the K Street Project or you are out of it. There was one Member of this House who said if they are not on the list as being a part of the K Street Project that is contributing to make sure that Republicans stay in the majority here in the House, and that also means if they did not hire staffers or ex-staffers that Republican leadership Members asked them to hire, they were not going to have access.

I am going to read this Washington Post article, Wednesday, November 16, 2005, front page: White House documents show executives from big oils companies met with the Vice President's energy task force in 2001.

Well, let us look at the chart. What happened in 2002 after they met? Wow, $34 billion in profits.

''Something long expected by environmentalists but denied as recent as last week by industry officials testifying before Congress. A document obtained this week by The Washington Post,'' and that was November 2005, ''shows that officials from ExxonMobil, Phillips, Shell Oil and BP, Inc., met in the White House complex with Cheney's aides who were developing national energy policies, parts of which became law and parts of which are still being debated.''

The bottom line is it is just not natural for the Republican majority to be part of my revolution. Their revolution is making sure that the special interests get what they want, not the revolution of accountability or any Contract for America that they came up with.

So they got in majority, and they lost touch with the rhetoric that they were sharing with the American people, and look at what happened.

The facts, after the meeting in the White House complex was documented, not the fact that the White House came forward and said, we had a meeting; no, we had to do some insight and investigation. And guess what? The American spirit broke through, and somebody said, yes, there was a meeting, I was there. Not me, but the person who reported that. There was $34 billion in profits after the meeting. Let us look at the profits here. I think that was a pretty good meeting on behalf of the special interests.

That is why Mr. Toomey is saying what he is saying. That is why Mr. Gingrich is saying what he is saying, and that is the reason why the average American person is saying, I am not voting party; I am voting for my family. I am not voting because somebody said, you are a Republican and this is what you have to do. I am not a registered Republican, but I guarantee you those people who delivered the Republican majority in this House voted for the things that they were promised some 12–14 years ago, not what is going on right now here in this House.

If they want a change, they have an opportunity to do it, and we want to make sure that everyone knows they have the power, and not to believe the rhetoric of the 30-second ad about why you need to elect me because the facts are not there on the majority's behalf, the Republican majority's behalf, that they are going to deliver for the average American worker, the average American senior citizen, the average American child that is trying to get an education. Because when they walk across that stage this week and next week, they are going to pay more than ever for their education, and it comes by way of the cuts in the budget to make sure that oil companies and millionaires get their tax breaks, and make sure that individuals who are carrying out bad policy as it relates to not having a strategy in Iraq continue to carry on that bad policy, and no one can wave an Independent or Republican or Democratic flag and say what is happening right now is good in Congress.

What we have to do is change the majority in this House to a Democratic majority because we have the will and the desire to lead, and I believe the American people know. And I believe the Republican majority knows it. I think it is going to happen, and it is going to happen because of what they have not done and what we are willing to do.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I actually think you are being presumptuous because you touched a nerve when you said you think the Republicans lost touch along the way at some point. That presumes that they were ever in touch because when we listen to remarks on the floor of this House where commentary is made that, for example, people who make $40,000 a year do not pay taxes, when you know you pay upwards of $50 to fill up a gas tank, you scratch your head and wonder, who pumps their gas?

When you cannot determine whether they know what the cost of groceries are, are they shopping for food? Who is talking to them in their districts? Are they driven around in limousines? Because all of the indicators, their desire to maintain tax cuts for the wealthiest among us, all of the indicators are there that they really are that out of touch.

I mean, just to have it stated on the floor of this House that people who make $40,000 do not pay taxes, that is just unbelievable. But then just take the tax cut bill, the rubber-stamp Republican Congress, literally and the walk down memory lane that we have been going through turned the projected $5.6 trillion record surplus into a record deficit of $3.2 trillion. The President has quadrupled our debt held by China. The tax bill that was signed, Americans making $20,000 annually get $2 and Americans making $40,000 get $16.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Can you imagine somebody getting a $2 tax break?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. When I ask people in my district in town hall meetings to raise their hand and show me how many have benefited and got money in their pocket from the tax cut legislation, out of several hundred, I get two maybe three hands; that is preposterous.

Here is the kicker: Americans making more than a million dollars a year get a thousand times what people making $40,000 get. They get $42,000. We have a graphic that we can show that means that they can buy a Hummer. That is essentially, they are basically being given the equivalent of a Hummer.

Let me just conclude by adding on to what Mr. Gingrich has said because he also said some things very recently. On May 14, on Meet the Press, Mr. Gingrich said: I think we have to confront the fact that on a variety of fronts, we are not getting the performance we want. The people in charge have an obligation to deliver. When you learn that maybe as much as $16 billion of the $18 billion that we sent to Baghdad for economic purposes was not spent effectively, you know something has to change. When you look at Katrina and you realize that we, the United States Government, paid $1.75 to a general contractor who paid 75 cents to a contractor who paid 35 cents to a subcontractor, who paid 10 cents to put the blue tarp on what was temporary roofing, then you know something has to change.

The leader from the 1994 Republican revolution says something has to change. Change is not going from Republican to Republican. It is going from Republican to Democrat so we can take this country in the direction that we really should be going, and so that the next generation of Americans are going to have an America that they can grow up and believe in.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We have positions that are right down the middle. We have positions about investing that money instead of giving $42,000 in tax breaks; making sure that everybody has access to broadband; making sure people are healthy; and No Child Left Behind is funded; and balancing the budget by putting paygo rules on that won't allow us to spend money that we do not have, that we do not either cut from a program or raise revenue somewhere.

As we are wrapping up here. I had an opportunity to go to the Kennedy Library. Mr. MURTHA received the Profiles in Courage Award for his stance on the war and coming out against the war. I ran into Ted Sorenson, who was President Kennedy's top adviser and speech writer. He said, when he was with President Kennedy, they never submitted a budget to Congress that was more than $10 billion off. They would maybe have some, but never more than $10 billion.

And when President Bush says this Congress has to rein in spending, he hasn't vetoed one spending bill, so don't give us this, and we are supposed to believe you. Let us put our faith back in the American people here, www.housedemocrats.gov/30something.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mrs. JONES of Ohio (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for May 22 on account of business in the district.

Mr. SNYDER (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today and the balance of the week.

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 Ms. WOOLSEY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. EMANUEL, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

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

Mrs. MCCARTHY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. ETHERIDGE, for 5 minutes, today.

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

Mr. SODREL, for 5 minutes, May 24.

Mr. ROHRABACHER, for 5 minutes, May 24.

SENATE ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The SPEAKER announced his signature to an enrolled bill of the Senate of the following title:

S. 1736. An act to provide for the participation of employees in the judicial branch in the Federal leave transfer program for disasters and emergencies.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MEEK. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at midnight), the House adjourned until today, Wednesday, May 24, 2006, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

7608. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of Class E Airspace; New Stuyahok, AK [Docket No. FAA-2005-22535; Airspace Docket No. 05-AAL-24] received February 27, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

7609. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment to Jet Route J-158; ID [Docket No. FAA-2003-22496; Airspace Docket No. 04-ANM-26] (RIN: 2120-AA66) received February 27, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

7610. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Modification to Class E Airspace; Del Rio, TX [Docket No. FAA-2005-23009; Airspace Docket No. 2005-ASW-18] received February 27, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

7611. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of Class E Airspace; Hillsboro, TX [Docket No. FAA-2005-22998; Airspace Docket No. 2005-ASW-19] received February 27, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

7612. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of Class E Airspace; Arctic Village, AK [Docket No. FAA-2005-22021; Airspace Docket No. 04-AAL-06] received February 27, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

7613. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of Class E Airspace; Tok Junction, AK [Docket No. FAA-2005-22537; Airspace Docket No. 05-AAL-29] received February 27, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

7614. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of Class E Airspace; Nondalton, AK [Docket No. FAA-2005-22536; Airspace Docket No. 05-AAL-25] received February 27, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

7615. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of Area Navigation Routes; Southwestern and South Central United States [Docket No. FAA-2005-21381; Airspace Docket No. 05-ASW-2] (RIN: 2120-AA66) received February 27, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

7616. A letter from the Program Anlayst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of Class D Airspace; Front Range Airport, Denver, CO [Docket FAA-2005-20248; Airspace Docket 05-AWP-13] received February 27, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

7617. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of Class D Airspace, Modification of Class E; Rogers, AR [Docket No. FAA-2004-19599; Airspace Docket No. 2004-ASW-12] received February 27, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

7618. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of Area Navigation Routes; Southwestern and South Central United States [Docket No. FAA-2005-21381; Airspace Docket No. 05-ASW-2] (RIN: 2120-AA66) received February 27, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

7619. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of Prohibited Area P-50; Kings Bay, GA [Docket No. FAA-2003-15976; Airspace