SINGLE-PAYER, NOT-FOR-PROFIT HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I've listened to the health care debate, as all Members have, for the last few months. And what's very interesting about it is that in this debate, we've essentially talked past the single most effective way to reduce costs and to provide health care for all Americans, and that is to create a single-payer, universal not-for-profit health care system.

Such a system is envisioned in and provided for in H.R. 676, Medicare for All, a bill that I had the privilege of writing with JOHN CONYERS of Michigan, a bill that is supported by 85 Members of Congress, by hundreds of community organizations and labor unions, by over 14,000 physicians, and a bill which represents an idea whose time has come.

Some basic facts require discussion when we're speaking about our health care system. And that is that we spend about $2.4 trillion on health care in America, all spending. That amounts to about 16 to 17 percent of our gross domestic product. Clearly health care is a huge item in the American economy.

If all of that money, all of that $2.4 trillion went to care for people, every American would be covered. But today, not every American is covered. As a matter of fact, there are 50 million Americans without health insurance and another 50 million underinsured. Why is it in this country which has so much wealth in this country, which has given so much of its wealth to people at the top, we can have 50 million Americans without insurance? By and large, it's because people cannot afford private insurance.

Why not? Well, it's very simple. When you look at the fact that an individual can pay $300 to $600 a month or more for a premium, when you look at the fact that a family can pay $1,000, $2,000 a month or more for a health care premium, when you consider that a family budget cannot in any way countenance the kind of health care expenses that most families can run into, when you understand that any family can lose its middle class status with a single illness in that family, you come to understand the dilemma that we have in America.

Why isn't health care a basic right in a democratic society? Why do we have a for-profit health care system? I will tell you why. Because out of that $2.4 trillion that is spent every year in health spending, $1 out of $3, or $800 billion a year, goes to the activities of the for-profit system for corporate profits, stock options, executive salaries, advertising, marketing, the cost of paperwork; 15 to 30 percent in the private sector as compared to Medicare's 3 percent.

This is what this fight is about in Washington. This is why the insurance industry is hovering around Washington like a flock of vultures. $800 billion a year is at stake. And so they will do anything that they can to be part of this game so that the government can continue to subsidize insurance companies one way or another.

One out of every $3 goes for the activities of the for-profit system. If we took that $800 billion a year and put it into care for everyone, we'd have enough money to cover every American. Not just basic health care, with doctor of choice, but dental care, mental health care, vision care, prescription drugs, long-term care, all would be covered. Everything.

People say how is that possible? It's because we're already paying for the universal standard of care. We're just not getting it.

GET 'ER DONE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURETTE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. LATOURETTE. I thank the Speaker for the recognition and thank the minority leader for this hour.

I'm going to be joined by my good friend, Mr. NUNES, from California and Mr. MCCOTTER, who is on his way.

I want to talk tonight, Mr. Speaker—most folks in America recognize the picture to my left. It's Larry the Cable Guy. And if you watch Larry the Cable Guy, his line is get 'er done. And get 'er done is a good way to entertain somebody in a movie. I would suggest it's not such a good way to run the United States of America.

Sadly, since the beginning of this year, we have had a majority in this House and in the other body and at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue that has taken the attitude of just get 'er done. And that can lead sadly to some unfortunate consequences.

The first get 'er done was we were told we had to have an economic stimulus package spending $789 billion of taxpayer money by President's Day. It was very important that the President of the United States have the opportunity to sign this bill by President's Day. So the White House's message to the Congress was get 'er done. And the leadership of this House got it done.

Sadly, they were embarrassed because included—and we're going to talk a little bit later in the hour—in the bowels of that stimulus package, which, by the way, was 1,100 pages long and Members of the House got 90 minutes to read it so I doubt many people read it—so people were embarrassed because they didn't read the bill to find out that in the bill was an authorization to give the insurance company AIG, which has received more, billions and billions of dollars, from the taxpayer, bonuses totaling $173 million.

Well, then the next get 'er done came along—and everybody knows we have a problem with the automobile industry in this country. And rather than wrapping up their affairs and going through a bankruptcy the old fashioned American way, the message from the White House was we gotta get 'er done in 40 days. Can you imagine a 40-day bankruptcy for Chrysler, the third largest automobile manufacturer in this country and for General Motors, the largest.

And the get 'er done there has been a lot of collateral damage. We have seen plants all across the country closed; we have seen about 50,000 auto workers about to be thrown out of their jobs. We have seen parts suppliers not get paid for manufacturing and making the parts that go into the cars. And we will talk a little bit later about the car dealers. Some brainiac decided that car dealers were a problem in this country and so therefore we have had to get 'er done; we had to close about 3,000 auto dealerships in this country, and we're going to talk about that, too.

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But, again, just like the economic stimulus bill, get 'er done is not really a good way to run the country because the other collateral damage that has occurred here recently is there are about 50,000 people that didn't work for General Motors, worked for companies like Delphi, that had their health insurance through General Motors, and guess what? Nobody cared at all about what happens to their health care. So while some of the UAW members that work for General Motors and Chrysler are now secured by stock ownership in the new companies, these 50,000 workers don't have any health care.

Then we came along to what at least in my State is a pretty controversial issue, the cap-and-trade legislation. Some folks on my side called it the ''cap-and-tax'' legislation. And basically, when fully implemented, I believe it will drive any job that's left in the State of Ohio out of the State of Ohio.

But, again, there's a way to do things here. I've been here for 15 years, and the way legislation usually works is somebody has an idea. We talk about it. We have hearings. They bring it to the floor. Members who have other good ideas have the opportunity to amend that legislation, and then we vote on it. Well, cap-and-trade, sadly, came to the floor, and at 3 o'clock in the morning—I think we voted on the bill on a Friday, and at 3 o'clock Friday morning, in a 1,200-page bill—which, again, nobody had read. They put in 309 new pages at 3 o'clock in the morning, and then we voted on the bill later in the day. And, again, get 'er done.

But we were told we had to get it done by July 4. So the White House called up the House, said get 'er done. Leadership said to their troops, get 'er done, and they got it done. But just like in the stimulus bill, people are embarrassed, because in those 309 pages,

which nobody read, they have found out that this cap-and-trade legislation, aside from dealing with carbon emissions and setting up a whole new speculative system, derivative system to trade carbon credits, it regulates water coolers.

If you have one of those water coolers in your house or at the office with the big jugs you've got to tip over, that's going to be subject to regulation. If you have a hot tub or spa outside your house, that's regulated under the cap-and-trade legislation. And people were really surprised that Christmas lights are regulated under the cap-and-trade legislation.

Now, listen, all of us want to deal with climate change, but you're going to have to go a long way to convince me that Christmas lights are somehow leading to global warming. So that's in the cap-and-trade bill. So get 'er done isn't really a good way to run the country.

And now this week, thankfully, they were not able to get 'er done on health care. The proposal going through the committees of this House—again, the White House said we've got to get 'er done by August 1, which is tomorrow. Everybody began moving around. But a funny thing happened on the way to get 'er done. Some conservative Democrats, Blue Dog Democrats, said, We don't think the government should be in the business of running the health care system and we should have a United States health care policy in this country.

And the previous speaker, Mr. PRICE, was talking. This bill, again, get 'er done won't take care of it because there are some scary things in this legislation. One piece of it is, for the first time in our Nation's history under the national policy, end-of-life counseling will be available. Well, that's good. I happen to be a big supporter of hospice and all the wonderful work they do at the end of a person's life.

But the problem with end-of-life counseling in this bill is that to get the cost savings that they want to achieve, you have to control cost. And so many of the models are taken from Great Britain and Canada, and in those systems there is a board, as the President wants to set up, that determines what procedures are covered, what drugs are covered, and what are not. And just by way of example, the same board over in the United Kingdom, it's called NICE. So who could be against something nice?

But NICE doesn't cover drugs for people with Alzheimer's, doesn't cover drugs for people with breast cancer, doesn't cover some drugs for people with prostate cancer. And the best one was macular degeneration, which is a degeneration of the eye and can lead to blindness. They won't approve the most effective drug. They approve the second-most effective drug, but this NICE board has determined that you can only get treatment in one eye. And so if you go to Great Britain in about 5 years, you're going to see a bunch of folks running around that look like pirates with eye patches because the NICE board is only going to let them take care of one eye.

I will yield to my friend from California.

Mr. NUNES. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I know my friend has spent a lot of time on these issues. We were involved in the first bailout back in the day, and I remember when you and I were very concerned about the country, where we were heading with the debt piling up. And then we got into the new administration with the stimulus bill, and keeping with get 'er done, they actually got that done, borrowed almost $1 trillion, and now they have very little of that money spent, out the door.

Unemployment was only supposed to go to 8 percent. Now unemployment is at 10 percent. In my home State of California, it is well over 10 percent. In my district, it's almost 20 percent. So they got it done, but really nothing got done.

And when you look at the cap-and-trade bill or the cap-and-tax bill, that was another example of getting it done and really getting nothing done, because ultimately, in their bill, if it becomes law, it won't take any CO_2 out of the air because you're going to have China and India continuing to build coal-fired power plants. In fact, your home State of Ohio I know pays 3 cents a kilowatt for its electricity because you use one of the greatest resources in America, which is coal.

And if you look at California today, in California we've passed, basically, cap-and-trade legislation through the State legislature. And I don't know if the gentleman knows this already, but in California we're paying 17 cents a kilowatt for electricity. So it's no wonder that California's unemployment rate continues to go up, costs to Americans continue to go up.

And so the Democrat Congress definitely is trying to get something done, but in the process of getting legislation passed out of this House, it's legislation that, at the end of the day, is going to hurt America.

And just to finish up on this health care debate, we were told numerous times by the Speaker that she had the votes. The majority leader said they had the votes. And now, here we are today. They don't even have the votes in the Energy and Commerce Committee, which is still meeting today in committee, and it seems like they're not getting it done—and thankfully. We don't want them to get this done because we don't want the government to take over our health care system, which the gentleman, I think, was pointing out.

Mr. LATOURETTE. I thank my friend very much. You make a great point, and I think I want to reinforce that point.

There have been some speakers that have come to the floor during the last few days saying that somehow Republicans are the Party of No and we don't want to reform health care and we're blocking this great health care proposal that they have. Well, that's not true. There are 178 Republican Members of the House of Representatives, 247 Democratic Members of the House of Representatives, and they can do whatever they want, whenever they want.

Mr. NUNES. Just to correct the gentleman, 256 Democrats, I believe.

Mr. LATOURETTE. Well, they got more.

Mr. NUNES. And how many votes does it take to pass a bill out of the House?

Mr. LATOURETTE. That would be 218. So 47 people can leave the reservation and you still have a piece of legislation.

So we're not preventing them from doing anything. As a matter of fact, we have four or five good pieces of legislation on health care that solve the problems of the doughnut hole and Medicare part D, take care of the uninsured in this country that don't have insurance.

And not only that, it's a sad situation that leads to a lot of cost shifting for people who do have insurance, deals with making sure that you can't be excluded from health care if you have a preexisting condition. But nobody will talk to our side of the aisle. And the attitude since the beginning of this year has been, we've got 258 votes, and we're going to do what we want when we want, and when we want your ideas, we'll ask you. And it's unfortunate that we haven't been asked.

But we are certainly not blocking what it is they're attempting to do. They are, at the moment, having a fight amongst themselves. You have conservative Democrats versus liberal Democrats, and they can't figure it out. And once they're all on the same page, they can pass it, and pass it in the Senate, and the President clearly wants to sign it.

Mr. NUNES. And if the gentleman would yield again, we've heard several times from the White House and from the Democrat leadership and this Congress blaming the Republicans for not having a plan. And as the gentleman pointed out, first of all, they've never wanted to work with us. Second of all, they've never asked us for our plans. And third, the Republicans have very good plans, some plans that myself and Paul Ryan from Wisconsin have worked on and we're going to continue to work on over the break.

The good thing, the best thing about the plan that we've put together, that the Republicans have put together, is that we deal with the Medicaid problems in this country. And one thing we have to look at over the long run is that debt continues to pile up. And we have three major problems in this country that no one wants to talk about, and that's the unfunded liabilities that this country has. We have

the unfunded liabilities of Medicaid, unfunded liabilities of Medicare, unfunded liabilities of Social Security.

The sad part about the Democrat plan is that they want to put more and more people on Medicaid. And now in my district, only 22 percent of the doctors will see Medicaid patients. And so the Republican plan that we've put forward actually deals with the Medicaid problem that we have in this country and actually gives people better health care. And that is, I think, something that needs to be done.

Mr. LATOURETTE. I thank the gentleman.

And the gentleman is hiding his light under a bushel basket because the other thing that his piece of legislation does that this piece of legislation that's being debated now does not do is that you bend the cost curve.

Two of the reasons that we're having a health care debate in this Congress are, one, to get better quality health care and take better care of people in this country, but two is to rein in the cost.

Now, one of the reasons that we don't have a bill this week and that they couldn't get 'er done was that the Congressional Budget Office came back and scored it, at one point, that this didn't save money. It was actually going to add $1.6 trillion to the debt. And to be completely bipartisan, because my friend brought up the Wall Street bailout, that was George W. Bush. That was Hank Paulson, his Treasury Secretary, that came to Capitol Hill with a three-page bill—can you imagine, a three-page bill—and said, you've got to give us $700 billion to go to Wall Street or the world is going to come to an end. So you take that $700 billion, you take the $700 billion—

Mr. NUNES. But I will add, if the gentleman will yield for a second, I will add that this was a bipartisan bailout that was passed.

Mr. LATOURETTE. Right.

Mr. NUNES. So it was the White House working in conjunction with the Democrat-controlled House that passed the first bailout. And I think one of the things we're going to talk about later, as we transition into, I think, some of the things we want to talk about is AIG.

Mr. LATOURETTE. I do.

Mr. NUNES. I think you really have to look at where that money that went first to AIG and then somehow got to, guess where? Goldman Sachs.

Mr. LATOURETTE. Right. The gentleman is absolutely right. But if you take the $700 billion from the Bush administration, $789 billion from the stimulus package, you take the auto bailout—which is tipping $60 billion, $70 billion—you take the budget that the President sent up here that the majority passed of $3.5 trillion, you really are talking real money.

And a lot of folks come to the floor and talk about, well, this is a debt that's going to be passed on to our children and our grandchildren. That's true. But even those of us in our middle age are going to have a problem with this because we have to borrow it, and you have to borrow it from places like China, and you borrow it at higher and higher interest rates. And so it's not only a debt that needs to be repaid some day, the interest on the debt is eventually going to strangle this budget.

Mr. NUNES. And if the gentleman would yield again, I want to make one important point back to the point that you're making, and that is that the Congress, for many years, has spent too much money. There is no question about that, Republicans and Democrats have spent too much money. But if you look at the budgets that have been put forward with the stimulus bill and the bailouts and the government takeover of companies, you look at the unfunded liabilities, the Obama administration potentially could triple or quadruple the debt by the time President Obama is out of the Presidency. That doesn't include that the Obama administration could pile up more debt than all previous Presidents combined.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Would the gentleman yield?

Mr. LATOURETTE. I would be happy to yield to my friend from Michigan.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. We're from Michigan. We think in smaller numbers. And I know that my colleague has been very interested in what's been happening with dealers, automobile dealers. But as we talk about a $787 billion stimulus plan, as we talk about the bailout, as we talk about the cap-and-trade bill—I'm not sure exactly how big that is going to get in new taxes—and then you talk about there are folks here who want this government to take over health care, $1.6 trillion.

Can I just share with you two examples of what happens when we try to do a $1 billion program? Will the gentleman continue to yield?

Mr. LATOURETTE. I'm happy to yield to the gentleman.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. This Cash for Clunkers program, I've talked with four of my dealers in the last couple of hours, they've sold a total of about 150 cars over the last 5 days. And all we're doing is processing a rebate, right? It's either a $3,500 check or a $4,500 check. Out of those 150 sales, zero, exactly zero rebates have been approved, although the paperwork has been filed. Some of the paperwork has been filed three times.

The paperwork is 21 pages—this is from one of my dealers. They sent in 21 pages, and here's what the sales guys wrote: Each of these pages have to be scanned in and must be saved with the attached file names, and each page must be uploaded separately. You cannot save anything until the end. So if the Web site crashes, you get to start over.

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If the Web site works, it takes approximately 1 hour per deal?

Mr. LATOURETTE. Wow.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. That's the paperwork.

Mr. LATOURETTE. Reclaiming my time, it's my understanding that the Web site has crashed at least twice.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Yes. And it crashed again this morning.

Then they get the rejection notice. And to one of my dealers, I said, Well, you know, you file it the first time, you get a rejection, and it comes back, and you fill it out appropriately the second time like it's filling out taxes, these 21 pages.

And he said, Pete, I've had a number of these things come back for a third time. He said, I've just had one come back.

This is what happens from the people who want to run our health care system, The voucher you have submitted with invoice number da da da has been rejected for the following reason: No reason provided.

The next line says, The voucher can be resubmitted if the reason for rejection can be corrected.

Now, what is this dealer supposed to do? Go back and submit exactly the same 21 pages that he did before? Because the reply came back and said, The reason you've been rejected is ''no reason provided.'' Under this program before you file, you've already destroyed the car. You've had to ruin the engine, and the guys are now riding around in their new car. The dealer can't get their rebate check. So we can't even handle a billion-dollar program.

The consumers love this program.

Mr. LATOURETTE. It's a great program.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Consumers love it. It's a program that has been well intentioned. It's driving car volume. But it's driving our dealers absolutely nuts, and they are already under a tremendous amount of stress and strain. And, remember, these folks can't implement a $1 billion program that all it does is provide a rebate. That's all it does, is it provide a rebate. And they want to run our health care system.

And I asked him how hard is it to do a rebate through Ford or GM or Chrysler? He said, That's not a problem at all. They handle it just like that. They send it in, and we get it done just like that.

These guys can't process a voucher, and then we're asking them to plan wages, plan salaries, and all these other kinds of things.

Mr. LATOURETTE. I thank the gentleman. Reclaiming my time, the gentleman has just indicated why they can't ''get 'er done.'' They want to get all these things done, but the fact of the matter is they're not getting them done. And the figures that I saw, there are 16,000 dealers across the country that have entered into this program; so you're not talking about millions of applications that need to be processed. You're talking about 16,000 dealers, and even if the entire billion was exhausted, that's 200,000 cars, and they can't get it done.

So if this health care thing gets out of here where the government runs health care, I really don't want to have any heart problems, because you might wind up with a '57 Chevy engine in your chest.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. The reason for your denial of care is ''no reason provided,'' but you're not getting it.

Mr. LATOURETTE. That will be comforting.

I want to get back to AIG for just a second because that was the first ''get 'er done,'' the stimulus package. Folks were embarrassed that they actually found out that they had authorized, by voting for the stimulus bill, these exorbitant bonuses going to AIG executives. And just a week ago Saturday, it's been like 3 weeks now, this was the headline in the Washington Post: ''AIG Plans Millions More in Bonuses. Troubled Insurer is in Talks With U.S. Over Another $250 Million in Bonuses to Their Executives.''

And why it's important that we follow things like regular order, and people say nobody pays attention to process here, but why you can't have an 1,100-page bill filed at midnight and expect people to know what's going on and why goofy things happen is because that's not the way we are supposed to govern. ''Get 'er done'' is not a way to govern.

So in the stimulus bill, this chart shows the paragraph that was included in the stimulus bill that specifically, these 40 or so words, specifically said that any bonus that was agreed to before February 11 of this year, which was the day the stimulus bill passed, was protected. And then the $173 million in bonuses were paid to AIG, and I saw the President on television. He said, I'm shocked. We had people on the floor on this side of the aisle, I'm shocked.

Well, you shouldn't be shocked. If you had done the bill in the way that the Founding Fathers intended it to be done and if you gave people more than 90 minutes to read 1,100 pages, they wouldn't have been shocked. They would have known and they would have had a choice: Do you want to authorize $173 million for bonuses? If you do, vote ''yes.'' If you don't, why don't you fix the thing?

Mr. NUNES. Will the gentleman yield for just a point of clarification?

Mr. LATOURETTE. Sure.

Mr. NUNES. For the folks who don't quite understand this, this clause that you have in front of you was in the stimulus bill, and this basically approved the bonuses to AIG.

Mr. LATOURETTE. Yes.

Mr. NUNES. I just have a question for the gentleman. Do you know how many Republicans voted for the stimulus bill?

Mr. LATOURETTE. No Republicans voted for the stimulus bill, and 11 Democrats also did not vote for the stimulus package.

But it's worse than that because when the bill left the House, it didn't have this paragraph in it. When it left the Senate, it didn't have this paragraph in it. As a matter of fact, the Senate bill on the stimulus package had an amendment that was adopted the old-fashioned way, in a bipartisan fashion, with a Democratic Senator from Oregon, Mr. WYDEN, and a Republican Senator from Maine, Ms. SNOWE. And they drafted legislation because nobody liked this, handing out billions of dollars to AIG and Wall Street and seeing these executives who have failed. I never understood a bonus. A bonus is supposed to be because you did a good job. I have yet to meet anybody in any of the jobs that I had that said, Steve, you did a really crappy job; here's a bonus.

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. NUNES. Another clarification. During the bailout and before the bailout, how much money had AIG already received from the Federal Government?

Mr. LATOURETTE. I stopped counting it at about $125 billion. It may be more.

Mr. NUNES. A hundred and——

Mr. LATOURETTE. A hundred and twenty-five billion dollars.

Mr. NUNES. So then we went on to award bonuses.

Mr. LATOURETTE. We went on to award bonuses, and here's how it happened: The Snowe-Wyden language was in the Senate bill that said no bonuses. You know this and the Speaker knows this, that we pass the bill, they pass the bill; when it doesn't match up, we have to have a conference to try to work things out. So they appointed conferees. The Senate sent some guys and gals over; we sent some people over. No Republicans were included, by the way. And they said, Let's resolve these two bills. Well, by resolving the two bills, the Snowe-Wyden language was taken out, I mean physically taken out, and this new paragraph protecting the bonuses was put in by somebody.

We are talking a little bit about Larry the Cable Guy and ''get 'er done.'' This was one of my favorite games when I was growing up, the game of Clue, and with apologies to Hasbro, the problem is we have asked, since that news came out, who put that paragraph in? It shouldn't be that hard. Who put that paragraph in? Nobody will own up to it. But it didn't, you know, come from the heavens. Obviously somebody took a pencil or an eraser and took out the Senate language and put in that offending paragraph, but nobody will tell us who did it. And we've asked and asked and asked.

So here's Clue, and basically we think that we have it narrowed down to these folks. If you played Clue, you know you have to figure out what room it takes place in, what the weapon is, and who's the perpetrator. We know that the weapon was a pen. It might have been a computer, but I'm going to say it was a pen. And these are the rooms here in the United States Capitol, the Banking Committee, the Speaker's office, the Senate Leader's office, the conference room where these folks met, the lobby—I don't think it happened in the lobby—the Ways and Means Committee, the lounge, library, and the Appropriations Committee.

Now, we've been asking this since March of this year, and since March of this year, we have excluded the gentleman down here in the lower corner. That's CHARLES RANGEL, Democrat of New York, who's the distinguished chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. He actually emerged from this conference and sort of threw up his hands, according to press reports, and said, The government's being run by three people, and I'm frustrated. And he left. So we don't think Charlie Rangel did it.

Mr. NUNES. But that could be an important clue. I'm on the Ways and Means Committee, and we did not put that language in there. So Mr. RANGEL claimed that there were three people that were writing the bill.

Mr. LATOURETTE. Basically. That was his quoted statement in the press.

So the other folks, and we know this individual was in the room. This is Rahm Emanuel, our former colleague from Illinois who now serves as the President's Chief of Staff. This is Mr. Orszag, who is the OMB Director. Mr. DODD, Senator from Connecticut who is the chairman of the Banking Committee. At the top the honorable Speaker of the House, Ms. PELOSI of California; and Senator HARRY REID of Nevada, who is the leader over on the other side.

And I put the question mark down there, and this really angers me, because somebody had to authorize it, but some of the statements have been that staff did it. Listen, there's something seriously wrong if a nonelected official or appointed official in the case of the OMB Director can change legislation. So they clearly had to have authorization. A lot of eyes were on Senator DODD and the Department of the Treasury.

But here's what's frustrating. We're asking that question, and it's a pretty simple question: Who did it? And maybe you had a great reason for it. Just tell us why you did it. But they won't. So we have had to go to not only come talk about it on the floor, but we have had to take other action here since March to try to figure it out. So I filed something known as a resolution of inquiry, which asked the Department of the Treasury, Hey, who said take out the one and put in the other? Just tell us who it is. That's a pretty simple question.

And I'm going to say something about the chairman of Financial Services, BARNEY FRANK of Massachusetts. He took the resolution of inquiry. They got more votes than we do. He could have killed it. He did not. He voted it out of his committee 63 or 64–0, and it's been sitting at the Speaker's desk since the end of April, the beginning of May.

Now, again, the Speaker knows this, but the way the legislation gets to the floor is that the majority has to schedule it. And for whatever reason, the distinguished majority leader, Mr. HOYER of Maryland, has chosen not to schedule this piece of legislation for floor activity. So even all of the Democrats on Financial Services that want to know the answer to the question will not get the answer to the question because we can't get the bill to the floor. So we've gone a step further.

There is a provision in the House rules that if they won't act, you can file something called a discharge petition. We filed the discharge petition. It's right over there by the attractive lady in the tan suit. And we have asked Members to sign it so we can bring it to the floor and talk about it. To date, every Republican has signed it, and we don't have yet a Democratic Member who has signed it, but that's the only way we're going to get to it.

But Chairman FRANK did something else commendable. He called up the Treasury and he said, Quit horsing around. Just tell us who did it. And he set up a number of meetings with the Treasury Department. My staff went to the meetings. I went to the meetings. The last contact that we have had from the Department of Treasury, and I just want to get it because it really is remarkable, we got a call, the banking staff got a call from a fellow who's in Government Relations at the Treasury Department and said that, Well, you know, we really didn't like that meeting because it was too political and we think our lawyer has said we can't answer your question.

Now, what the heck? It's not like we are dealing with somebody from the mob and the lawyer says take the fifth. We are talking about the United States Department of the Treasury, which is responsible for administering these billions and billions of dollars, and they're telling the United States Congress that a lawyer has said they can't tell us who authorized $173 million in bonuses for people who work at AIG?

And then they tried to compound the crime because, as I said, a lot of people were embarrassed. They went home to their districts. Even Senator DODD, there was a news article about people screaming at him at a town meeting, How could you do that? How could you do that?

Mr. NUNES. If you would yield just for clarification, because I know that there are folks just now coming in. They are here on their vacations and they may have missed the beginning of this. But what we are talking about here is that well over $100 billion has been given to AIG. We had the House bill that every Member of Congress admitted that they didn't read. As a matter of fact, Mr. BOEHNER sat right there where you are, Mr. LATOURETTE, and asked if anyone had read it, and no one said they had read it. He dropped the bill right there on the floor. And the language that you talked about that awarded the bonuses was not in the bill at that time.

Mr. LATOURETTE. Right.

Mr. NUNES. So the Senate bill and the House bill come together, and suddenly that's put in its place, and now we are sitting here with legislation. After giving well over $100 billion to AIG, now we are going to give these folks bonuses, millions of dollars in bonuses, and no one knows who's done it.

Mr. LATOURETTE. Right. That's a fair summation of where we are. And that's troubling to me.

Mr. NUNES. Just for clarification again, Larry the Cable Guy didn't do it, right?

Mr. LATOURETTE. Larry the Cable Guy didn't do it. He's not on the chart.

But, again, this goes back to Larry the Cable Guy, however. That's why ''get 'er done'' cannot be the way to run the United States of America, because people get embarrassed. People will not have the opportunity to read things. You and I each represent about 700,000 people, you in California and I in Ohio. I had no input in this bill, not because I didn't want to. I'll bet you had no input in this bill. It's just not the way to run the thing.

□ 1530

And when you run it this way, you get embarrassed, and when you get embarrassed, you should own up to it.

That is where I was going next. Rather than owning up to it and saying take the language out, let's not permit this to happen, it was a mistake, the majority, rather than bringing the resolution of inquiry to the floor, brought a bill to the floor to tax these bonuses which they authorized at 90 percent.

I have to tell you, I don't think these people should have gotten these bonuses. But when you begin to use the Tax Code to punish people that you don't like and say, you know, today it is the AIG guys, we are going to tax you at 90 percent; tomorrow it could be truck drivers, we are going to tax you at 90 percent; we don't like the guys that do talk radio, we are going to tax you at 90 percent, it is a very dangerous precedent; and it is not only dangerous, it is stupid. And it is stupid because the head guy, the biggest bonus-getter, the biggest bonus-getter at AIG got $6.4 million.

Now, if you don't think you should get a bonus, why do you let him keep 10 percent? And 10 percent is $640,000. It takes 16 years for somebody in Ohio making $40,000 a year to make $640,000. So, again, it is not only a misuse of the Tax Code; it is stupid. It was a fig leaf, because people were embarrassed, and, sadly, sometimes when people get embarrassed around here, rather than doing the right thing, they do the politically expedient thing.

So they all went home. And, thank god, the Senate didn't pass that bill, and thank goodness President Obama said—he didn't say it was stupid, but he pretty much said it was stupid.

Mr. NUNES. If the gentleman will yield, he has done that recently.

Mr. LATOURETTE. Yes, well, he has done that.

Mr. NUNES. If the gentleman will yield again, you have a long history before you came to Congress. You worked for the people of Ohio. You were involved as a district attorney, and I know that you had prosecuted many people and upheld the law. And so as we are beginning to go through this and beginning to look at who is out there, who possibly did it, we still, here we are, what, almost 6 months after we passed the stimulus bill, and no one knows where this language has come from.

Mr. LATOURETTE. We can't get an answer, which is really shocking, that the United States Congress can't get an answer to a pretty simple question, Who did it?

I want to move on, with my friend's permission, to the get 'er done and the car companies. We were told we had to have an expedited bankruptcy proceeding, first with Chrysler and then with General Motors because that was going to save the car industry in this country and we have to move forward.

As a matter of fact, on April 30, the President gave a press conference when Chrysler went into bankruptcy, and this is his exact quote, that nobody should be confused about what a bankruptcy process means. It will not disrupt the lives of the people who work at Chrysler or live in the communities that depend on it.

Now, I was pretty heartened by that, and I was heartened because in Twinsburg, Ohio, we have for the moment, won't have soon, a stamping plant for Chrysler. About 1,200 people work there.

In the days leading up to the bankruptcy announcement, the company went to the Chrysler employees, the UAW employees, and said, In order to make this work, you have to enter into a new contract and you have to give up some stuff. You have to give up wages, benefits, some health care, some vacation.

The day before the bankruptcy announcement, the auto workers in Twinsburg, Ohio, went to their union hall and cast their ballots on giving up stuff, and 80 percent of them, over 80 percent of them, said, We are going to do it so we can keep our jobs, and we are going to do it so we can make sure that the company we work for continues to survive.

That took place all across the country. And the contract, not surprisingly, was approved.

Well, then a funny thing happened, and the funny thing that happened was that afternoon, when all the documents were filed in the bankruptcy case, there is an affidavit from a guy, his name escapes me, Robert, I will think of it in a minute, but that basically indicates that no, no, no, there are going to be disruptions. We are closing plants. We are throwing people out of work.

Specifically, eight plants, eight plants in cities all across America were

told, Hey, auto worker, even though you voted to give up some stuff to stay employed, we are shutting you down. Nationwide, it was close to 10,000 people were told they weren't going to have jobs anymore.

The interesting thing is before the President went to the microphones, he went to talk and give this press conference at noon on April 30. At 11 o'clock that morning the White House was very helpful in setting up a conference call with Members of Congress, Governors, other people that were interested in this issue, and with his task force, his unelected auto task force.

The task force members got on and said, This is a great day. This is a great day. We have saved Chrysler, or will through this bankruptcy. Jobs won't be lost. As a matter of fact, because Chrysler is going to enter into a deal with Fiat, the Italian car manufacturer, we have great news: we think Fiat is going to bring 5,000 more jobs to the United States.

So, silly me, I got off the call and watched the President of the United States. And then there is another call. When the President was done, we had another conference call with the guy that was the head of Chrysler then, Robert Nardelli.

Mr. Nardelli was basically reiterating the things that occurred during the course of the President's announcement, and then he took questions, which was nice. And the very first telephone call that he took was from Governor Granholm of Michigan, the Democratic Governor of Michigan. Obviously in Michigan they have got a lot of concern about auto manufacturing.

And she said, you know, Great job. Way to go. But I just have to ask you a question. The President in his announcement said this deal will save 30,000 jobs. I just want to make sure that that wasn't code for something else, because there are 39,000 people in the country that work for Chrysler.

Mr. Nardelli said no, no, no, no, he was just rounding down and there aren't going to be any difficulties, which, of course, wasn't true.

Later in the call, one of our colleagues from Wisconsin, GWEN MOORE, Democrat from Milwaukee, she had, used to have, an engine plant in a town called Kenosha, Wisconsin. And she specifically asked, she said, 800 people work there. Where in your restructuring do you envision the Kenosha plant being?

She was told, We love Kenosha. Kenosha is safe. Kenosha is going to be fine. Those 800 people don't have to worry.

So, silly me and silly Representative MOORE and silly Governor Granholm, we all sent out press releases praising the President, praising the task force and the work that they were doing, only to find out that my plant was closed and Ms. MOORE's plant in Kenosha, Wisconsin, was closed.

Now, obviously that caused some concern with the folks in Wisconsin and the folks in Ohio, so the Governor of Wisconsin, Ms. MOORE also and the mayor of Kenosha, sent a letter to Mr. Nardelli and said, Why did you do that?

Madam Speaker, I include the letter for the RECORD.

CHRYSLER LLC,
Auburn Hills, MI, May 7, 2009.

Hon. Governor JIM DOYLE,
East State Capitol,
Madison, WI.

DEAR GOVERNOR DOYLE: I want to start by expressing my sincere apologies about the confusion surrounding comments I made on a conference call with you and other elected officials about the Kenosha Engine Plant on April 30, 2009.

In response to a question from Congresswoman Moore regarding the future of the Kenosha Plant, I mistakenly conveyed the status of the Phoenix investment in Trenton, MI. The facts I described were accurate for Trenton and not Kenosha, WI. I recognize this has added further confusion to an already difficult situation.

I would like to take this opportunity to clarify the Phoenix Engine Program production status.

In 2006, DaimlerChrysler started a program for a new V6 engine family. Based on industry volumes and forecasted demand, the initial planning volumes were 1.76 million units. In order to achieve this level of production, a site selection process was initiated that included four new locations in Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin and Mexico.

Before site selection was finalized, the engine volume planned for the combined company was reduced when the common engine program with Daimler was redefined as a Chrysler only engine. This reduced the number of production sites to three.

These three sites would have the capability of producing 1.3 million V6 engines. Early in 2007, for a variety of reasons, the Corporation was required to reduce its capital investments in all programs which required a new production strategy for the Phoenix engine. Therefore, Chrysler decided to reduce the number of greenfield plant locations to two. In May and June of 2007 the Company chose those two sites and announced the greenfield investments of $730 million in Trenton and $570 million in Saltillo and broke ground on the construction of the facilities. The greenfield decisions were based on the adjacency of the proposed plants to the point-of-use assembly locations.

In February of 2007, Chrysler notified the State of Wisconsin and Kenosha officials that a greenfield site was no longer viable, but rather that a retool of the existing Kenosha Engine Plant was under consideration. The Kenosha retooling plan resulted in necessary capital savings; however, it required the Kenosha site to continue to produce its current engines through 2013.

In late 2007 and 2008, deterioration in industry volume resulted in a drop of the 1.3 million unit demand to 880,000. This reduction in volume and the need for Kenosha to produce its current engines resulted in the company deciding to defer the retooling strategy.

Chrysler kept Kenosha Area Business Alliance updated on the status of the retool through 2008. As the market began to collapse through late 2008 and 2009, a decision was made to idle the Kenosha Engine Plant in December of 2010. This and other restructuring actions were included in the Chrysler LLC February 17, 2009 Viability Plan submission to the United States Treasury and the President's Auto Task Force. The specific plant actions, including Kenosha Engine Plant, were not made public because it would have been presumptuous to assume that the plan was going to be approved and inappropriate to communicate prior to thorough discussion with the United Auto Workers union.

On April 3, 2009, Chrysler officials met with the Kenosha Task Force and reiterated the need to defer the Phoenix Program. Upon emergence from Chapter 11, plans are to continue to produce the current engine families through December of 2010 at the Kenosha Engine Plant in order to support our current products. The Trenton Engine site has been completely facilitized and will launch when we exit from Chapter 11. The Saltillo Engine site has also been facilitized and is scheduled to launch mid-to-late 2010.

We would have hoped to have been able to convey this information to you and the community in a more timely fashion, but circumstances simply did not afford us an opportunity to do so. It is expected that virtually all employees associated with Kenosha and the other closures announced in our Chapter 11 filings will be offered employment with the new company.

While the company continues to address difficult market conditions, we expect that the Chrysler Fiat alliance will ultimately provide customers and dealers a broader competitive line of fuel-efficient vehicles and technology, and will result in the preservation of more than 30,000 jobs in the United States along with thousands of employees at dealers and suppliers.

Again, please accept my sincere apologies for the confusion. We will continue to work with the people of Kenosha to ensure an orderly transition.

Sincerely,

BOB NARDELLI,
Chairman and CEO.

The response they got back, Madam Speaker, on May 7 he wrote to Governor Jim Doyle and he said, I know I said Kenosha was safe, but I just need to tell you I was confused. I thought Kenosha, Wisconsin, was Trenton, Michigan.

Now, if I had a nickel for every time I got in the car and tried to go to Kenosha, Wisconsin, and ended up in Trenton, Michigan, that would be something.

Mr. NUNES. If I remember my geography correctly, there is a lake that separates Wisconsin and Michigan, correct?

Mr. LATOURETTE. Now the gentleman is nitpicking.

Mr. NUNES. Maybe they were going to take a boat.

Mr. LATOURETTE. Even the day before, and now I remember the guy's name, His name is Robert Manzo, Robert Manzo is the consultant that Chrysler hired to help sort of take them through this thing. The day before the filing, he sent this email exchange, which has been in all the newspapers, to the President's task force saying, Maybe we don't have to go this way. Maybe there is another way. Basically he said, I hope you think it is worth giving this one more shot, that is, to not have all these horrible things happen through the bankruptcy.

And here is the response from Mr. Feldman, the attorney on the unelected task force, who basically said, We are done, and indicated that he wasn't going to be treated to another terrorist like Lauria.

Now, I should explain. Lauria is the lawyer who represented the bondholders. These are people that invested

in Chrysler, and they were told that they had secure creditor status, and it was $27 billion.

Mr. Lauria represented some of them, and the some of them that he represented was the Teachers Retirement System of Indiana. So people who had taught the children of Indiana for years and had retired, in order to maximize their retirement fund they had invested in Chrysler, which was once a pretty safe investment, and they were told that they were secure, which means they get paid before anybody else gets paid.

Mr. Lauria was advocating on behalf of the teachers of Indiana and saying, You cannot just get rid of us. You have to compensate these people who have invested $27 billion in Chrysler. But the response from the task force is that these people were acting like terrorists.

Mr. NUNES. If the gentleman will yield for another point of clarification, you referred several times to this unelected task force, auto dealer or auto company task force. And we have seen these czars that have been appointed by the President. We have 30-some or 40-some czars, I don't know. Every day we add a new czar.

Is there a difference between the czars and the automotive task force? Was there a czar of the auto task force?

Mr. LATOURETTE. There was a czar. The President of the United States appointed the auto czar, the head of the task force. He has recently gone back into private business. It is now headed by a fellow by the name of Ron Bloom, whom we will get to in just a second.

But, you know, a funny thing happened on the way to the task force too, because when they began making these decisions, people began to say, Well, who are these folks and what is their background? Were they in the manufacturing business? Did they make cars? Did they sell cars? Did they manufacture parts for cars? And The Wall Street Journal actually did a study of the members of the task force and found that most of them don't even own cars, and those that do own cars own foreign cars, the majority of them.

Mr. NUNES. How many people were on the task force?

Mr. LATOURETTE. I think it was 12 or 16. And then we also had one of our colleagues from Ohio, Mr. JORDAN, who serves on the Judiciary Committee, and the Judiciary Committee had a hearing with a panel that asked that question, How many people on the task force have any experience at all in the car industry? And the answer was none. Nobody. But despite that fact, they have made decisions.

Now, the second decision I want to talk about is the decision that they made that somehow we needed to close car dealerships all across America, and in Chrysler's case it was 789 and General Motors it is about 2,600.

According to the National Association of Automobile Dealers, about 60 people work at each dealership. So if you multiply that by the number of dealerships that were instructed to close, you are north of 200,000 people; 200,000 people. And let's get this straight about car dealers. Most of them own their own buildings, they do their own finance plan, floor plan, they do their own advertising.

The cost to the automobile company is pretty minimal. But, again, this nonelected task force that doesn't know anything about the car industry said, You know what? Toyota sells an awful lot of cars in this country and they don't have as many car dealers as Chrysler or General Motors, so therefore the car dealers must be the problem. They are the ones that are creating this problem.

So they basically gave—we had a car dealer from Michigan, I think it was, just at Chrysler's direction, was told to put $7 million into his building to make it attractive and all this other stuff. He didn't get paid for that. He got a letter saying, You are no longer a Chrysler dealer.

The car dealers basically came to town, and there were pretty amazing stories about some of these car dealers and the way they were treated.

□ 1545

But, you know, it's not just the 3,000 men and women that own these auto dealerships, it's the 200,000 people, the mechanics, the salespeople, the clerks, they're out of a job. So I don't know how you recover the economy by having less stores.

Mr. NUNES. If the gentleman would yield, one of the important points here that you've made is that this task force, this unelected task force that has no experience in running anything to do with cars—in fact, some of them don't even own cars—have now made this unilateral decision to close these dealerships, and the way that they were able to do that is because the government has now taken over ownership of the car companies.

Mr. LATOURETTE. The gentleman is absolutely right.

I will tell you that initially the auto task force ran from this dealer issue like a scalded cat, and they were really quick to put out a press release saying, We're not micromanaging the car companies. We don't know enough to run Chrysler and General Motors. This was the car companies. This was General Motors, and this was Chrysler. They made the decision. They are the bad ones who decided they were going to throw all of these people out of work.

A couple of things run counter to that. The first was, just like I think it's an interesting business model that you are going to sell more cars with less dealers, the auto task force in the Chrysler bankruptcy, according to an article in the Automotive News, didn't want Chrysler to advertise their cars during the pendency of the bankruptcy. When somebody, apparently, told them how stupid that was, they said, Okay, you can spend half of it. It was $134 million. So, again, this unelected task force apparently thinks that you can sell more cars if you don't advertise and if you have 3,000 less stores across the country.

The other thing that sort of gets in their way is Fritz Henderson, who is the president and the CEO of General Motors, old and new, gave an affidavit to the bankruptcy court in New York.

I would like to insert that into the RECORD as well.

UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK, IN RE GENERAL MOTORS CORP., ET AL., DEBTORS

AFFIDAVIT OF FREDERICK A. HENDERSON, PURSUANT TO LOCAL BANKRUPTCY RULE 1007–2

State of New York, County of New York

Frederick A. Henderson, being duly sworn, hereby deposes and says:

1. I am the President, Chief Executive Officer, and a Director of General Motors Corporation, a Delaware corporation (''*GM*''), which together with its wholly-owned direct subsidiaries, Chevrolet-Saturn of Harlem, Inc. (''*Chevrolet-Saturn*'') and Saturn, LLC (''*Saturn*''), and GM's wholly-owned indirect subsidiary Saturn Distribution Corporation (''*Saturn Distribution*''), are the debtors in the above-captioned chapter 11 cases (collectively, the ''*Debtors*''). I submit this affidavit (the ''*Affidavit*'') pursuant to Rule 1007–2 of the Local Bankruptcy Rules for the Southern District of New York (the ''*Local Rules*'') to assist the Court and other parties in interest in understanding the circumstances that compelled the commencement of these chapter 11 cases and in support of (i) the Debtors' petitions for relief under chapter 11 of title 11, United States Code (the ''*Bankruptcy Code*''); filed on the date hereof (the ''*Commencement Date*''), (ii) the relief requested in the motions and applications that the Debtors have filed with the Court, including, but not limited to, the ''first day motions,'' and

* * * * *

93. The Company, however, is not assuming and assigning to New GM all of its existing dealer franchise agreements. The Company's vast dealer network, consisting of approximately 6,000 dealerships, developed over an extended time period in which the Company's market share was growing and was far greater than it is now, and when there was far less, or even no meaningful foreign competition. Consequently, and precisely because there are now far more dealerships than the Company's market share can support, including, in some cases, multiple dealers in a single contracting community and dealerships that have become poorly situated as a result of changing demographics, the Purchaser is not willing to continue all dealerships. Among the dealerships the Purchaser is not willing to continue, for example, are those approximately 400 dealers who sell fewer than fifty cars per year, and those approximately 250 dealers who sell fewer than 100 cars per year. Approximately 630 other dealerships are not being continued because they are dealers who, in whole or substantial part, sell brands that are being discontinued.

94. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the 363 Transaction does not contemplate an abrupt cutoff of nonretained dealerships. In pursuit of the maximization of New GM's ability to, among other things, maintain consumer confidence and goodwill, provide ongoing warranty and other services, and preserve resale and trade-in values, the Company not only is giving approximately 17 months notice, but also will offer to enter into, and New GM will assume ''deferred termination agreements''

with most of the dealers whose franchise agreements are not being assumed, which should have the additional benefit of easing the hardships attendant to the dealership closings.

Mr. LATOURETTE. Madam Speaker, could you tell us how much time we have left?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland). The gentleman from Ohio has 11 minutes remaining.

Mr. LATOURETTE. I thank the Chair very much.

In this affidavit, Mr. Henderson indicates that the idea of shutting all these dealerships—in their case, 2,600—wasn't his idea. The purchaser rejected their plan. Does the gentleman know who the purchaser of General Motors is? It's the United States Government.

Mr. NUNES. It's us. It's the people.

Mr. LATOURETTE. It's the task force. So they rejected Chrysler's plan. They rejected General Motors' plan. They said, Go back to the drawing board. Mr. Rattner, who was the head of the task force, said, You have got to come up with a new plan; and Mr. Bloom testified in front of the Senate that they rejected the plans because they didn't find the car companies' plans to be aggressive enough when it came to shutting down plants, throwing people out of work, and closing car dealerships. So again, just like when people were shocked about the AIG bonuses, people running around town here saying, I'm shocked. Well, you shouldn't be shocked. You told them what to do. You didn't say that you have to close 10. You didn't say that you have to close one in Cleveland and one in California; but you did say you have to close a bunch; and you can't walk away from that responsibility.

And now there's legislation. I thought that the gentleman from New York was still in the Chair. The gentleman from New York (Mr. MAFFEI) is the lead Democratic sponsor of a piece of legislation that says, You've got to deal with these people fairly, these 200,000 people that you've tossed out of work. So he has proposed legislation. I have proposed legislation. But Mr. Rattner, before he left, in response to the legislation, the administration opposes the legislation to force the reopening of Chrysler dealers and prevent General Motors from closing dealers. So I don't know how much more they could be involved.

That brings us to Clue, the Travel Edition. The task force has said that they're not responsible for 20 auto plants closing and about 50,000 auto workers being thrown out of work. They're not responsible for the 50,000 Delphi workers who don't have health insurance today. They're not responsible for the 200,000 people that work at the dealerships across the country that are now going to be out of business. So who is? Around this chart we have Mr. Bloom. This is the Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Geithner; former President George W. Bush; the President of the United States; Larry Summers, the President's economic adviser; and down there is Robert Nardelli, the former head of Chrysler I was talking about.

Again, the same scenario. This is a pretty simple question: who decided to take the ax to those 20 plants, those almost 300,000 people and shut 'er down? I mean it's no longer get 'er done. It's shut 'er down. I think we should find out, but nobody will fess up. Nobody will say who did it.

Mr. NUNES. So nobody knows who did the AIG bonuses; no one knows who put that legislation in; and now no one knows who shut down the automotive plants, the auto dealers. We're sitting here with 300,000 people out of work in the largest democracy in the world, which is supposed to be a deliberative body where the Congress is supposed to make the decisions, and we have no answers.

Mr. LATOURETTE. The gentleman is correct. I just want to conclude, unless the gentleman has another thought.

Mr. NUNES. I just want to thank the gentleman for bringing this to the people's attention. This is really the only avenue that you now have is to come before the people, to come before the whole world, and you have laid out a very compelling case that, quite frankly, we're not getting anything done. In fact, we don't know who's doing what around here. I am troubled by this, what you've brought to the floor of the House; and I hope that you will continue your effort to figure out and get to the bottom of who did this.

Mr. LATOURETTE. Well, I will. And I thank the gentleman for participating in this. I want to thank Larry the Cable Guy for making a cameo appearance during the course of this. We want to be bipartisan. We want to get things here. But get 'er done by a date certain, no matter what the details are, when you drop 300 pages at 3 o'clock in the morning, when you drop 1,100 pages at midnight, when you work in private and in secret to draft legislation to do things like cap-and-trade and health care legislation, it really is not the way that the government is supposed to work.

We know, on our side of the aisle, as Republicans, that we did such a lousy job that the voters replaced us in 2006. We understand that. But by the same token, there are a lot of bright people on our side, a lot of bright people on that side; and I would believe that we could come together on all of these important issues and give the American people some legislation that they can have confidence in because Members of both parties participated. People are very suspicious of Washington. They say, It's so partisan. They're always fighting with each other. A giant step toward solving that would be to work these things out in a bipartisan way.

I thank the gentleman, I thank the Chair, and I yield back the balance of my time.

ISSUES FACING AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I always enjoy listening to my good friend, the gentleman from Ohio, with whom I have worked on a number of projects. I have the greatest respect for him. But I don't always agree with his analysis. It's interesting to listen to people who are claiming that they're concerned that they've been shut out of the process or that they are irrelevant. I do think there is some real question about the relevance of some of my friends on the other side of the aisle, but that is a decision that they and their leadership have made consciously.

Now I don't think that my good friend from Ohio falls into the description of what his fellow Ohioan has declared that Republican legislators should be. Minority Leader BOEHNER has said, They shouldn't be legislators, they should just be communicators, because their job is more of a political one, not being involved with the process. That is why their budget plan was not a budget plan, but it was a press release. In fact, I was kind of embarrassed for them when they announced it with great fanfare and the press asked, Well, where are the details? You're giving us a press release. Sadly, sitting on the Budget Committee, we found that our Republican friends were not involved with a serious alternative that would deal with our Nation's problems.

We have enacted, for the first time in history, a significant, comprehensive piece of legislation that's passed the House to deal with carbon pollution, climate change, global warming, and the fact that the United States simply can no longer continue to waste more energy than any other country in the world. The Republican response, the tone has sort of in part been set by the Senator from Oklahoma who has declared that global warming is a hoax. We have not seen a Republican response that puts forth a comprehensive effort. In fact, the previous 8 years of the Bush administration, Republican control, were characterized by global warming denial, interference with States that were trying to do something. Remember the State of California and nine other States who wanted to put in place more effective energy protections for automobiles, higher standards? California has this right under the law. It requires a waiver for the Federal Government, waivers that Republican and Democratic administrations alike have always granted, except for the Bush administration and the Republicans in the latest round over the last 8 years. They denied that right for the people in California to move forward and deal with it. Denied