School District is contemplating a move that portends great cost to the citizens of Los Angeles and portends a trend that should be fought by all means at the Federal level. I speak of project labor agreements. This is what is being proposed in Los Angeles. This comes to school construction. ''The contractor recognizes the council and its affiliated unions as the exclusive bargaining representatives for the employees engaged in project work covered by this agreement.''

Mr. Speaker, in the LA Daily News on the editorial page, it is noted that ''even a school board member who often sides with the teachers union can't turn a blind eye to this outrage.'' What is outrageous? Well, quite simply this fact, Mr. Speaker: The estimates are that this plan could increase construction costs by 10 to 15 percent in the district.

Now, lest you think this is only something that Los Angelenos should be concerned about, Mr. Speaker, I would commend to your attention something this House once saw in April of 1998, the Vice President of the United States, he who last week claimed that he was the father of the Internet, he who infamously claimed 2 years ago that there was no controlling legal authority given the outrage of alleged campaign donations to the Clinton-Gore team from foreign governments including the People's Republic of China, well, this selfsame Vice President announced that the Clinton-Gore team would aggressively pursue linking Federal projects to union construction firms.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I believe that everyone should have the right to apply to do work and if a union shop is the bidder that is accepted based on its quality of work, that is well and good. But here is the problem with union-only agreements as the Vice President promised to Boss Sweeney and others: Not only is the blatant payoff, Mr. Speaker, but in fact it will end up costing the American taxpayer across the width and breadth of our annual budget an additional $5 billion a year.

Now, mindful of the florid rhetoric and the feel-good attitude that the President brings when he steps to this podium annually to offer his State of the Union message and mindful that sadly his rhetoric does not always square to reality, I would invite the President and the Vice President and others who claim that project work, or union-only agreements, would somehow be beneficial to step up and defend spending an additional $5 billion of taxpayers money. Because, you see, Mr. Speaker, there is a better way, indeed to use the President's term, there is a third way, but that would involve truth and merit rewards.

And again I say, lest there are those who misunderstand, if it is a union shop that steps forward with the best ability to do the work, well, then God bless them and they should be awarded a contract on their merits. But to restrict or to claim that this government or indeed any other governmental entity will deal only with union shops is to circumvent freedom of choice, freedom of association and fiscal responsibility. For to paraphrase Goldwater and perhaps change his phraseology, I believe that union firms have a right to bid on a contract but I also believe that open shop firms should have that same right. And if an open shop can do the work better, then they should be selected.

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

(Mr. WISE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. STENHOLM addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

FOREIGN OIL REVERSAL ACT OF 1999

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

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, it was a year ago today that I rose on this House floor to raise a concern with my colleagues with what is happening in the oil patch in our country. We are in the process of losing our domestic oil industry, which I believe is to our great detriment down the road and in fact today. The domestic oil industry, those small producers, those wells that are producing 2.2 barrels per day on the average, are currently being shut down and closed in. Since 1997, a little more than a year ago, we have lost over 41,000 jobs in the United States with more than 136,000 oil wells shut down. In my State of Kansas alone, the job loss is someplace between 5 and 8,000, with a loss of revenue this year of $955 million.

If the problem we face with our economy is not great enough, it is perhaps superseded by the problems we will face strategically in the future. The U.S. dependence on foreign oil continues to rise. We had problems, those of us who are old enough to remember the early 1970s, with long lines at the gas station and the oil embargo. At that time our foreign oil imports were only 36 percent of our U.S. consumption, while today 57 percent of the oil consumed in the United States is derived outside the United States. That estimate is expected to rise to 70 percent in about 10 years. We have set the stage for significant and serious problems in defending our country and in our strategic reserves.

Mr. Speaker, this issue needs the attention of the administration, of the Department of Energy and of the President of the United States. It also could use the attention of Members of Congress. Yesterday, I introduced legislation along with several other Members of Congress, the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. PICKERING), the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS), and the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATKINS), and this legislation mirrors legislation introduced last week by the distinguished Mr. DOMENICI.

This bill attacks the issue of foreign dependence upon energy, and by suggesting that when 60 percent of our consumption is derived from foreign sources that the administration, the President of the United States, must begin a process to determine the extent of the problems created by our foreign dependency on oil, must report to Congress those difficulties, his assessment, and must make recommendations to Congress to what we can do to minimize our dependence on foreign oil, issues such as tax reduction, regulatory relief and conservation measures. We have also included in this bill many proposals to react to the days in which the oil and gas industry was considered highly profitable and Congress and the administration then decided to, in a sense, gouge that industry, to take away its profits. And today when western Kansas crude is priced at $8 or $9 a barrel and the costs of breaking even for that production is $16, it is time to reduce, eliminate the tax policy in this country that discourages marginal well production and discourages this industry from remaining alive and solvent.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that over the course of the next few days and over the course of the next few weeks, Congress will begin to focus on the fact that we are losing an important industry in our country but perhaps more importantly focus on the fact that we are selling short our future, our children's future, our grandchildren's future by our reliance upon oil from other countries. It is clear that we spend billions of dollars protecting our foreign supplies but next to nothing in protecting domestic production.

Perhaps as troublesome to me as anything is the idea that the so-called surplus that results in this price of oil is derived from the fact that we are importing oil from Iraq. So on one hand we are trying to contain Saddam Hussein's activities and on the other hand we are providing the financial resources for him to pursue those activities, and at the same time we are hurting our own men and women employed