

buying home heating oil for this winter, think how it could have been.

Think how their lives would have been different if, for the last 7 years, instead of defending the subsidies for big oil companies, the tax breaks for big oil companies and the royalty holidays for big oil companies, the Bush administration and the Cheney administration had put their heads together and had thought about the future as opposed to the past. But when you have two oil men together in the Oval Office in the White House, they think about the past, and that is protecting the oil companies; it is not about the future.

Think if President Bush had come out for any increase in the mileage standards 7 years ago where we would have been, instead of defending for 32 years the right of the automobile companies to keep us away from more efficient automobiles.

But that would have been the future. The Bush-Cheney administration has never thought about the future; they have only thought about the past, and that has turned out to be terribly, terribly costly to the American consumer.

#### HEALTHY HOSPITALS ACT

(Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I know much of our concern is on energy and gas prices, but I want to remind Members of some grim statistics on other issues.

If an airplane crashed today and 250 people died, we would send the FAA and every other Federal agency to investigate. If the same thing happened tomorrow, our concerns would escalate, too. If it happened a third day, we would shut down the airline industry. We don't seem to do that same thing, and we have that many deaths each day from infections in hospitals.

In April of 2005, when I first started talking about infections in hospitals, we have had since that time over 6 million cases, over 320,000 deaths, and have wasted \$162 billion. Just in 2008 alone, 969,000 cases, 47,000 deaths, and \$24 billion.

When I introduced my Healthy Hospitals Act, H.R. 1174, the aim was to have hospitals declare their infection rates so people could compare hospitals so we could do something about it.

Hospitals can clean up their act. They can reduce their infections, and Congress needs to make sure there is a law of the land requiring them. People have a right to know if they are going to leave a hospital at all.

#### IRAQI OIL

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

Mr. KUCINICH. In March of 2001, when the Bush administration began to have secret meetings with the oil com-

pany executives from Exxon, Shell, and BP, spreading maps of Iraqi oil fields on the desk, the price of oil was \$23.96 per barrel, and then there were 63 companies in 30 countries, the U.S. not included, competing for oil contracts with Iraq. Today, the price of oil is \$135.59 per barrel; the U.S. Army is occupying Iraq, and the first Iraq oil contracts will go without competitive bidding—surprise—to Exxon, Shell, and BP.

Iraq has between 200 billion and 300 billion barrels of oil with a market value in the tens of trillions, and our government is trying to force Iraq not only to privatize its oil but to accept a long-term U.S. military presence to guard the oil and to protect the profits of the oil companies while they charge Americans \$4 and \$5 a gallon and while our troops continue dying.

We found the weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. We found the weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, and it is oil. As long as oil companies control our government, Americans will continue to pay, and they will pay with our lives, our fortune, our sacred honor.

#### MEDICARE ADVANTAGE

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

Mr. PITTS. Madam Speaker, the House voted this week on Medicare.

First, let me make one thing clear: We need to pay our doctors. We cannot continue to make it more difficult for doctors to make the decisions to see Medicare patients. A permanent fix is absolutely necessary.

Having said that, the bill we voted on this week took a very short-sighted approach. By cutting the successful and innovative Medicare Advantage program in order to pay for the doctors' payment fix, there will be cuts to Medicare Advantage plans that will reduce access, benefits, and choices for millions of our senior citizens, especially low income seniors and those in rural areas.

We can take care of our doctors without cutting benefits for our seniors, our Nation's senior citizens. The cuts to Medicare Advantage were \$47.5 billion. This would do great damage to an effective aspect of Medicare that serves our senior citizens. We can do better than that.

#### OPPOSITION TO NEW OFFSHORE DRILLING

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

Mrs. CAPPS. Madam Speaker, I rise in response to recent calls for new offshore drilling. These arguments for new drilling hit a dry hole for several reasons.

First, we are already drilling offshore. Eighty percent of the known off-

shore reserves are in areas where leasing and drilling is allowed. Today, the oil companies have nearly 6,000 untapped leases in the Gulf of Mexico alone.

Second, with 3 percent of the world's resources and 25 percent of the world's demand, there is no way we are going to just drill our way out of this problem.

Third, even the Bush administration admits consumers would see little savings at the pump from new drilling.

Yesterday, Guy Caruso, head of the Energy Information Agency, said this about the impact of new drilling: "It would be a relatively small effect, because it would take such a long time to bring those supplies on. It doesn't affect prices that much."

Democrats have a better plan. Let's pass legislation that moves America in a new direction on energy by closing the Enron loophole on Wall Street speculators who are driving up prices. Let's reduce mass transit fares and build the infrastructure there, and let's force Big Oil to use it or lose it on drilling permits.

I urge my colleagues to join with me in bringing America to a new, more affordable energy future.

#### INCREASING AMERICAN JOBS AND ENERGY PRODUCTION RESPONSIBLY

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

Mr. BOUSTANY. My constituents in southwest Louisiana want solutions to the energy crisis.

On Monday, the Lake Charles American Press summed up what is needed in their editorial, something I have advocated for a long time.

They said, "The energy campaign should include more exploration, more refining capacity, more alternative energy sources, more renewable energy, retirement of society's dependency on the internal combustion engine, and an increase in conservation.

"It should not be demagogued, for this is not a Republican or Democrat issue. It is a national issue that will require solutions, not insults hurled across the aisles of Congress and back and forth from Capitol Hill to the White House.

Those that feel the pain of higher energy prices and accompanying higher prices throughout the marketplace—the poor, those on fixed income, even the middle class—are being squeezed."

Increasing responsible energy production is one part of the solution. We must accompany that with conservation, with greater refining capacity and, most importantly, with unleashing individual American genius.

A magic bullet will not lower the price at the pump for American families, but increasing American energy production responsibly will help, and it will create jobs here at home.