

more widespread economic damage in the gulf coast and the entire United States.

The devastating effects of the oil spill go beyond waters and wetlands. For southeast Texas and southwestern Louisiana, our lives are intertwined with the oil and gas industry in the Gulf of Mexico. Over 180,000 Americans are directly employed in the oil and gas and mining industries along the gulf coast, and the prospect for severe economic hardship is very real. And that doesn't include the countless people that make their living in fishing and restaurant and tourism-related industries. Many of these out-of-work fishermen stand ready to help with the cleanup but are denied the ability to help because it is stalled down in Federal redtape.

I think we should have an-all-of-the-above energy policy, one that I believe we can achieve with the highest safety and environmental standards. Our Nation and our economy, however, run on fuel supplied by the oil-producing sector of the Gulf of Mexico. We cannot simply shut off the spigot and expect this Nation to run on nothing. Meanwhile, we need to clean up the mess and find out what caused this tragedy in the Gulf of Mexico. And that's just the way it is.

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TRIBUTE TO JUDGE EDWARD DAVIS, QUESTIONS REGARDING GULF OIL SPILL, AND COMMENTS ON REPUBLICAN "YOU CUT" PLAN

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart because of the loss of a very good friend of mine, Judge Edward Davis of the Southern District of Florida. He passed this morning. My love and condolences go out to Pat and the rest of the family for this tragic loss. I shall speak more at another time about my dear, good friend.

Additionally, Madam Speaker, while we are "slick and tired" of hearing people pontificate about this ecosystem disaster of apocalyptic proportions, there are questions that do need to be raised, not only for the entirety of the oil industry, but certainly for the United States Government in this particular case.

I would like the questions answered, and am proposing by way of a letter what steps are being taken to determine how much oil is underwater, where it is located, and what path it will take over the next decade.

What do we project the threat to be from a potential hurricane in the Gulf of Mexico, and how is our government planning for the potential impact of such a possibility?

What are the potential long-term impacts if the oil plume stays in its location and-or begins moving through the

loop current and Gulf Stream to various coastal locations?

Why have we not used our tankers that can suck in oil and water and pump out oil?

Why have we not asked Russia or Norway or China or Japan to use their submersibles in a meaningful way?

Interagency coordination is required. I happen to like Thad Allen. I think he is one of the better commandants that the Coast Guard has ever had, and I think he is doing an incredible job trying to coordinate. But what does the Federal Government's short-term, mid-term and long-term response structure look like, and what agencies are in charge, is what I would ask him and anyone else involved.

What steps are being taken to coordinate long-term observations, impact analysis, mitigation research and research that is needed? Not BP's research, but our research. We have an institution, NOAA. They have modeling efforts to improve hurricane intensity forecasting and a sufficient amount of information that could be beneficial, and I am sure many are using it.

What is the government's plan to improve security at these oil facilities? Nothing has been really said to us here in the Congress directly regarding this.

But, now, Madam Speaker, I want to turn to my colleagues on the other side for the remainder of my time.

Earlier today, I spoke on the House floor regarding the Republicans' latest ploy to stall the important work of this body known as "YouCut," which I like to call "CutYou." Each week, a targeted pool of online and cell phone users are supposed to vote for one of five programs that they would like to see cut from the budget. Simply put, YouCut can and probably does undercut our representational responsibilities, which leads to undercutting our democracy.

Once we start getting into the business of government by referendum, we negate representation. Ask my friends in California and ask those of us in Florida what impact that kind of activity has had on our representatives.

The last time I checked, last week, there were 280,000 votes, and that doesn't constitute the will of the American people. That is what brings me to the floor.

Very occasionally, Democrats and Republicans get on the floor and say what the American people want. What the American people know is that we represent them, and therefore when we stand up and say that 280,000 people voted a certain way, or 81,000 of them voted to cut much-needed funding from the Temporary Aid to Needy Families program, that does not represent the majority of Americans.

Quite frankly, I think how this idea got started is that they need to rebrand themselves, and I don't fault them for that, and they are particularly good at messaging, and I don't fault them for that.

The simple fact of the matter is that somewhere along the line somebody decided, let's use us a mechanism to gather in these emails. Let's use us a mechanism to get these phone numbers. And then what do we do at campaign time? We turn it back around and go at them to make them intense and enthusiastic. And that is what people can do, so I have no quarrels with that.

I have no quarrels with their new program. What is it called? It is getting ready to be unfolded next Tuesday on their Web site. It is called "America is Speaking Out." Well, the last time I looked in my office, America has spoken out an awful lot.

I don't know that we need too much more undercutting, and the poor in this country sure don't need an uppercut.

What Republicans fail to mention is that the "YouCut" program is inherently selective, and therefore biased. Neither online nor cell phone voters are able to vote to save a program rather than cut it. Furthermore, the "YouCut" program conveniently targets only those who have internet access and cell phones, which disproportionately leave out some of the poor and the elderly.

Instead of continuing to be the "party of no," Republicans should say "yes" to the American people and help pass the legislation that this National needs and deserves.

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

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SECURING THE SOUTHERN BORDER

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

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity of following my good friend from Florida in his wonderful address to the House. I wish to talk about one particular issue.

There was a newspaper article that came out today that said that President Obama is scheduled to send 1,200 troops to the Arizona-Mexico border. If indeed that report is accurate, I commend him for that type of activity, because his goal is to try to stop three of the most heinous organizations that are entering this country through public lands on the southern border: Illegal drug traffickers; illegal human traffickers and all the violence, especially against women, that they present; and the potential terrorists coming into those areas.

The escalating violence on the southern border is of unprecedented proportion. Unfortunately, the success of stabilizing that border is not in the number of bodies that we send down there, but the ability of those bodies to have