

Well, I want to bring us back up to where we are now this year to see what progress we've made. I want to mention three pieces of progress we have made that are going to, I think, be examples A, B and C of why the President's message of clean energy will be received well tonight:

Number one, this year is the General Motors Volt. It is a plug-in hybrid electric car, a car that you can plug in and go 40 miles all on electricity; and then if you want to go more than 40 miles, it has an internal combustion engine that will generate electricity to charge the battery that will run the wheels of the General Motors Volt.

And when I asked General Motors to bring the Volt to Capitol Hill a few years ago, people thought, interesting idea, will never work. Well, guess what. The General Motors Volt this year was North American Car of the Year a couple of weeks ago. It stunned the auto industry, and it is going to be one of the great leaders as we move to the electric cars of the future.

We have the domestic manufacturer, the Ford Focus, that we think is going to follow. Tesla is being manufactured here. We hope to see Toyota and Nissan produce electric cars here as well. These are the cars not of the future but of today. And we can lead the world in the manufacture if we do some of the things that the President will talk about tonight to electrify our auto transportation fleet.

Second, I want to talk about one of the most exciting events I've ever had as a U.S. Congressman, and that is last October I went to the Wooden Cross Lutheran Church in Woodinville, Washington. And I got to participate with that congregation in dedicating the very first electric charging station in America in a church parking lot. And I thought, this is a great thing for America that we are electrifying our transportation fleet, allowing Americans a place to plug in their electric cars.

And we dedicated this charging station. It's about 3½, 4 feet tall. And you pull up to it and plug in your electric car in the Wooden Cross Lutheran Church parking lot. The Good Book says "let there be light." Well, now let there be power, and verily there is power in this church parking lot. And there's going to be more power in thousands of places in America because of our stimulus bill which has allowed the creation of these electronic charging stations.

Third, I want to mention the production of batteries. We have grown something like—and I want to make sure I get the number right—700,000 clean-energy jobs doubling renewable energy manufacturing and generating jobs in America by the year 2012. And the clean-energy sector has grown 2½ times faster—faster than the U.S. economy in the last year and a half.

And one of the reasons is because we are growing an electric battery manufacturing capacity industry here in the United States. We only had 2 percent of

that capacity in 2009. We believe we can have 40 percent of the world's capacity by 2015. And if you want to think this is not a reality, go to Holland, Michigan, where because of our stimulus bill that we passed last year, we are putting hundreds of formerly laid-off auto workers to work in Holland, Michigan, making lithium ion batteries to run our electric cars. And that is happening because of what we did.

Let's grow these clean-energy jobs. I look forward to the President's speech tonight.

A MORE PERFECT UNION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as I was walking through the hallway, I encountered an individual who was enormously excited about the President's State of the Union. They happened to be a new employee of this House. This would be the very first time that they would have this privilege and this honor. I think it is important for us to recognize that it is a privilege and an honor. In essence it is a responsibility of this administration, of this President, to follow in the tradition in the law of the land that the President presents to the Congress, to the people of this great country, the State of the Union.

Frankly, I'm an optimist. I am so grateful that we live in a country that has a Constitution that has prevailed for so many years, that we have language in our Constitution that says that we have organized to create a more perfect Union, that the words of the Declaration of Independence are pressed upon our hearts: We hold these truths to be self-evident, that we all are created equal with certain unalienable rights of life, liberty and pursuit of happiness.

That's what I expect to hear from our President tonight, a man of passion and commitment and dedication, a man who feels the pain of this Nation, a man who has sacrificed his own personal prestige and popularity in order to make very difficult decisions.

The American Recovery Act, for example, went into the nooks and crannies of this Nation and built up small communities, provided extra police officers, provided more patient rooms, gave more resources to local hospitals and research institutions to make this country great and created jobs. And if you look at a grid that shows the job creation of the last administration, you will see that it is predominantly all red, jobs lost. But as we have struggled to build and climb, we aren't going in the right direction.

And so I would ask the President to stand his ground on investment in America and infrastructure in America. And I would say to this body that we must stand committed and dedicated to the protection of the vulner-

able. Does that mean increasing the deficit? No. I happen to have had the privilege of working on a balanced budget. It's exciting. We passed a balanced budget, and out of that we created the Children's Health Insurance Program and 22 million jobs in the last Democratic administration.

□ 1030

We can do that now. We can create jobs, and I would encourage the President to focus on the infrastructure. Why? Let me give you an example.

The city of Houston, now the third largest city in the United States based upon the census data that will be finalized in the month of February, we are in line after 30 years to create a world-class mobility system. We have been granted a billion dollars over a number of years, not wasting money because Texas happens to send more to the United States' tax coffers than we get back, but we will be creating 50,000 jobs by investing in a light rail system to move people forward, to eliminate the emissions crisis that we have, and to put people to work.

The crisis that we are now in with not having passed the appropriations of the 11th Congress, which I secured some \$150 million for us to start, stymies all of these need-to-build projects on bridges and freeways, on dams that need to be repaired. All of that creates the genius of America or boosts the genius of America and let's us work.

So, Mr. President, stand your ground on making sure that we move forward on infrastructure so that we can make it in America, meaning that Americans can make it, they can survive, they can improve their quality of life, and we can make it in America.

I want us to build the light railcars. Bring it on home. Let us build turbines that are part of wind energy. Let us build the solar panels. And, yes, let us build our buses and trains. Stand your ground, Mr. President.

And then for the most vulnerable of America, let's put it on the line that we are not going to touch Social Security. I know the panic that goes through senior citizens, the disabled, veterans who are dependent not only on the veterans' compensation but they are dependent on Social Security. Let's draw the line. And, too, the young people of America. Let's be very clear, you are not carrying the senior citizens. We are not taking out of your future. Remember the words of President Kennedy who said: Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country. Social Security is an investment of those who have worked and those who are disabled.

And so, Mr. President, stand your ground tonight in this most privileged opportunity to speak to the American people. Bring us together as we will all be sitting with each other. So let us stand our ground for the future of America.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 33 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer: "Open the door. Heighten the security. Gather the people. Proclaim a fast. Through the medium of television, enter in, and ready yourself to listen, America."

Lord God, today this House Chamber and its Members prepare this place and this Nation to welcome President Barack Obama tonight to listen to his State of the Union.

Guide and protect him, Lord. Grant him health, wisdom, prudence, and forbearance.

Help all Americans, Lord, for "we the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty" do assemble and ready ourselves to hear the President's message and act according to the Constitution that holds us together as a new order both now and for ages to come.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. POE of Texas led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ELECTING MEMBERS TO CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Democratic Caucus, I offer a privileged resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 52

Resolved, That the following named Members be and are hereby elected to the following standing committees of the House of Representatives:

(1) COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET.—Ms. Schwartz, Ms. Kaptur, Mr. Doggett, Mr. Blumenauer, Ms. McCollum, Mr. Yarmuth, Mr. Pascrell, Mr. Honda, Mr. Ryan of Ohio, Ms. Wasserman Schultz, Ms. Moore, Ms. Castor of Florida, Mr. Shuler, Mr. Tonko, and Ms. Bass of California.

(2) COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS.—Ms. Schwartz, to rank immediately after Mr. Higgins.

(3) COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION.—Ms. Zoe Lofgren of California and Mr. Gonzalez.

(4) COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS.—Ms. Linda T. Sánchez of California, to rank immediately after Mr. Michaud.

Mr. ALTMIRE (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain 15 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

FOREIGN AID TO CHINA—ABSURDITY

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the government is going broke. Government spends too much. It borrows too much. It taxes too much. One idea is to raise the government credit card limit.

It's like when my four kids went off to college. When they reached the maximum on their credit cards, the credit card company would simply raise their limit. Thus, they could spend more money by borrowing money. However, they all found out how difficult it was to get out of debt until they quit spending money.

Instead of more U.S. debt, why not cut spending? Start with foreign aid. There are 194 countries in the world, and the United States gives to over 150 of them.

Did you know we give money to dictator Chavez of Venezuela, the tyrant of South America? Did you know we give money to Russia?—and the zinger of all—did you know we give money to China? Yes, the country that owns most of our debt gets foreign aid.

This absurdity must cease. No more foreign aid to the likes of Venezuela, Russia or China.

And that's just the way it is.

BIPARTISANSHIP AND JOBS

(Mr. BACA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, at tonight's State of the Union Address, it is vitally important that President Obama lays out an effective strategy for new job creation.

The economy is improving, and with more than 1 million private sector jobs created in the last year, more people are going back to work; but far too many Americans still find themselves without jobs, especially in my district in the Inland Empire, where unemployment is 14 percent.

At this time of enormous challenges, we must all recognize that the problems we face cannot be solved by a Democrat or a Republican solution alone. Only—and I state only—by working together and finding common ground will we overcome the obstacles in front of us.

I stand ready to work with all of my colleagues, Republicans and the tea party included, to think outside the box and create a better future for our children and our country.

As we prepare for the President's address tonight, I ask my friends on the other side of the aisle: Are you ready to work with us to move forward?

GIVE THE AMERICAN PEOPLE A NEW DIRECTION

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

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, tonight the President of the United States will appear in this Chamber, as nearly every President has for more than 150 years, and report on the State of the Union, and we will receive him with the respect that is due his Office.

We are told in press reports that the President will focus on the future, on winning the future; but as the President said last Friday, "The past 2 years were about pulling our economy back from the brink"—and we expect to hear the same thing today.

But frankly, as most Americans know, during the last 2 years, this administration and the former majority in Congress met our present crisis with an avalanche of borrowing and spending and bailouts and taxes and takeovers and mandates. Far from pulling our economy back, the weight of debt and taxes and regulation have stifled our economic recovery.

Mr. President, we will not win the future with the failed economic policies of the past. As you come into this hallowed Chamber tonight, we urge you, Mr. President, for not just a new speech. Give the American people a new direction.