

the idea that we are stuck at 26 and we are stuck at 26 forever is not a credible argument because there are other vehicles in the process that would be just as rapid and just as fast if we would get over this idea, this pride of authorship, and if we would all work together on a bipartisan basis to fashion a solution that all veterans can live with. That is incredibly important. For me, this is a starting point, not an ending point.

It is important, it seems to me—and I hope to do that by example, Mr. Speaker, that we stay away from the finger-pointing and the blame game—that we not be guilty of the fiery rhetoric I have never understood.

As a west Texan, my instinct is always to put fires out. It is never my instinct to add additional fuel. So the partisan fires that rage in this building, it seems to me, need to be put out, and the interest of the American people and, in this case, the American veteran need to be put first and foremost and at the front and center of everything that we are doing.

We shouldn't stand and salute the VA, as the chairman has indicated—I agree with that—but we should stand and salute every single veteran who has served and every single veteran who deserves health care and who doesn't get it.

We should apologize, Mr. Speaker, to every single veteran who has stood in line for those months and months at the VA and not been able to make it through that small funnel, and we should apologize to them if we don't broaden that funnel to allow more people to get more care.

Yeah, there may be changes to the system, but those changes to the system are further down the hall, further down the way, further down the road, further down whatever. Today, here, we are talking about additional VA facilities. That one question we can settle, we can settle tonight or tomorrow, whenever the vote is on this, and we can make sure that we expand that pipeline, so that we don't try to push so many veterans through this really narrow pipeline, so that some of them get squeezed out of the system.

We should make that pipeline bigger so that more people get served, and each of us, each of us—Republican, Democrat, Independent, Libertarian, agnostic—each of us should be proud of that vote.

Stand up and salute our veterans, stand up and salute our people who served, and stand up and admit that they need access to health care. That is what this motion does, Mr. Speaker.

On that note, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

The question is on the motion to instruct.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. GALLEGO. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

NEW DATA ON MARCELLUS PRODUCTION

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, natural gas production in the Marcellus and Utica shale formations is projected to grow 36 percent by 2035, according to a recently released industry report from ICF International.

According to the report, which is released quarterly:

Well data from producers suggests ultimate recovery of gas in the Marcellus will average 6.2 billion cubic feet per well, up from 5.2 billion cubic feet per well in the last report.

According to a recent Energy Information Administration drilling report, gas production in Pennsylvania alone has more than quadrupled from 2009 to 2011.

Today, Bloomberg News reports:

Record natural gas production from the Marcellus is helping send U.S. output to an alltime high.

Another recent industry report from Morningstar, Incorporated, noted that Pennsylvania is now ranked third in the Nation for natural gas production and that the Marcellus is expected to account for nearly one-fourth of all U.S. gas output by 2015.

Mr. Speaker, natural gas continues to provide jobs and family-sustaining incomes that are much needed in the Nation's slow economic recovery. At the same time, we are moving closer to energy independence.

UNFUNDED LIABILITIES—THE GREATEST THREAT TO OUR FUTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. YOHO). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SCHWEIKERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS), I believe it is southeast Illinois.

CELEBRATING THE LIVES OF ALAN DIXON AND KENNY GRAY

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for yielding.

I rise today to celebrate the lives of two extraordinary public servants, both considered from southern Illinois—one from deep southern Illinois—Senator Alan Dixon and Congressman Kenny Gray. Both passed within the last week or so, but our mourning has turned into remembrance and reverence for their undeniable commitment to all of us.

Senator Alan Dixon—or as he was commonly known, Al the Pal, as we from Illinois knew him, and eventually everyone else in this institution and in Washington knew him as that also—was a larger-than-life personality, with a can-do spirit, if you will.

He came to Washington to get things done, particularly for his beloved Illinois. From his beginnings in Belleville and St. Clair County to being State treasurer and secretary of State, he modernized the offices he served in to better serve the people of the State.

Elected to the U.S. Senate in 1980, he soon realized that Illinois lacked a cohesive message in Washington, D.C.

With Senator Chuck Percy, he began a monthly Illinois get-together that continues to this day. It brings together Members of the House and the Senate, downstate, Chicago, Republican, Democrat, conservative, moderate, and liberal. We sit around, and we talk about the Illinois agenda and how we can work together to advance it.

Our prayers and best wishes go out to his wife, Jody, and his family and friends.

I would also like to single out a couple of other people who were very special in his life. One was Gene Callahan and Scott Shearer. Their public service on his behalf is emblematic of that of all those who worked with my friend, Al the Pal.

Just as a side note to my colleague, we have a colleague here who is a Member of Congress, CHERI BUSTOS, who is the daughter of Gene; and there is that great connection of, in essence, a politically active family that continues to serve.

We will miss Al the Pal. He was a great friend and a great public servant.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me turn to Kenny Gray. Kenny Gray was a very colorful Member of this Chamber, well known for spending many hours in the chair. He loved this House so much that, after he retired, he ran again and came back.

He was known as really a cult of personality. In a sea of Washington grey suits, white shirts, and red ties, Kenny stormed through this place in a flurry of colors that had never been seen before, but you dare not look away, as the Prince of southern Illinois was here, and he was determined to fight for his constituents.

Kenny made a big difference in southern Illinois. As the coal industry started suffering challenges, he worked hard. He was known as the Prince of Pork and the Prince of southern Illinois.