Ms. Strassel says, ''The American dream has always been to own a bit of property on which to pursue happiness. And we are very slowly doing away with that in this country.''

GENOCIDE AGAINST TAMILS IN SRI LANKA

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, genocide is often described as the planned and systemic annihilation of a racial, political or cultural group. As we look at different situations around the world, we often see instances in which genocidal activities are being carried out. We examine the struggle for self-determination in Kosovo, the ethnic conflicts in Bosnia and Macedonia and every other place where we have gone to safeguard the rights of ethnic minorities.

We failed to do that in Rwanda, and I do not want us to ever sit by and allow this level of atrocity to occur again without our intervention.

Unfortunately, there is another serious ethnic conflict under way of an almost genocidal bent in another part of the world. Let me tell you where it is and why we, the American people, do not know much about it despite the fact that our government is involved. The conflict of which I speak is the ethnic conflict that is taking place in Sri Lanka where the Tamil minority is systemically being destroyed by the Sinhalese-dominated Government and its military.

I have every reason to believe that the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka has been denied their legitimate rights and are being subjected to the most inhumane treatment by the Sinhalese-dominated Government since the nation became independent in 1948.

Since the Tamil people and the Sinhalese people are concentrated predominantly on different parts of the island since ancient times, Sinhalese politicians have virtually ignored the legitimate concerns of the Tamil minority because they are elected almost exclusively by Sinhalese electorates.

The Tamil minority, which yearned to share the benefits of their newly found freedom with the Sinhalese, were dumbfounded when the Sinhalese-dominated Government rejected Tamil demands for the use of their language for regional administration, seek administration to universities based on merit, to secure employment opportunities without discrimination, to prevent their traditional homeland from being settled by Sinhalese citizens under government-sponsored colonization schemes and to develop their districts.

Furthermore, Tamil demands for any measure of regional autonomy for Tamil areas receive rejection by the Sinhalese-Buddhist clergy on the grounds that it would threaten the spiritual and ethnic integrity of the Sinhalese-Buddhist nation.

Every peaceful demonstration staged by Tamils to show their displeasure with the government was broken by force, mostly with the tacit approval of Sinhalese politicians. Hundreds of Tamils have been killed; their property damaged. As a result, almost half a million Tamils have had to take refuge in foreign countries. Another half million have been displaced from their homes within Sri Lanka. Their most treasured library along with some of the rarest books describing their ancient history and culture were deliberately burned by the army also with the tacit approval of a government minister.

Under these circumstances, Tamils felt as if they had no choice but to encourage its youth to organize, and many of their young people have taken military action, fighting back as part of a self-determination and liberation front.

The LTTE, as in every civil war, has carried out some violent acts that targeted government establishments in Sinhalese areas to counter the brutal activities of the Sri Lanka Government and has succeeded in some instances. Now comes the time for the real intervention that is needed. We ought not stand by and allow this ethnic conflict to continue to the demise of a people, specially those who constitute the minority.

Therefore, I hope that our government, this government, will become more diplomatically involved, will try and bring about peaceful resolution of this conflict that is wrecking a nation.

ENERGY POLICIES FOR THE FUTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PETERSON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, tonight a group of us here would like to talk about energy. We have heard a lot of discussion about energy. In fact now that gasoline prices have kind of dropped off, home heating prices have declined and things have sort of settled down, electric shortages in the West have not been happening for a few weeks, people say there is no crisis, it is just a lot of hype, a lot of smoke.

I am not one who believes that, and I agree with President George Bush and Vice President DICK CHENEY. This country needs a comprehensive energy policy. Let us look at the record and see the trends happening.

Recent trends, everybody has concern that the dependency on oil was coming from parts of the world that do not care about us, OPEC nations. We are approaching the 60 percent factor. That is not a healthy thing for our country.

Coal, there has been a very flat use of coal and a resistance to the new clean coal-use technologies. Coal use has been flat in this country, and maybe slightly declining.

Then look at nuclear where the percentage is slowly dropping. There has been a moratorium on new nuclear uses ever since the problem that happened in Pennsylvania many years ago. There have been no new plants built or planned; and the interesting part is in a recent report from the Department of Energy, the problem with nuclear continuing is the resistance of relicensing of existing nuclear plants. If we do not relicense our current plants, we are going to lose a great deal of our electricity.

Then we have hydro. The Department of Energy had the same mark beside hydro: flat, slightly declining, difficult to relicense. That is the view of the Department of Energy.

Then we have renewables, and we would like to see them grow and expand and take up the marketplace. In renewables, we have had very slow growth in solar, wind, geothermal, and more recently fuel cells. I think fuel cells are the one with the huge promise, probably sooner than others. There are those who think solar and wind can solve our problems. Every graph I look at shows them slow, almost no growth.

Then we have the infrastructure issue that we take for granted. We do not worry about how our electricity gets to us, or how our natural gas gets to us; but we have a gas transmission system that is not well connected and not large enough, and does not cover some parts of the country so there are parts of the country that do not have access to natural gas.

Electric transmission. We do not think much about those electric lines going from community to community; but that is how we get our power, and that system is aging, inadequate to supply the needs of today.

The refining capacity in this country has been slowing declining, the number of refiners; and yet our use of petroleum products has been climbing at a fast rate. Is that a healthy situation to be in?

If we really want to have energy that is affordable and dependable, we have to have stable prices. To have stable prices, we have to have ample supplies of all kinds of energy.

A few years ago we were sort of drunk in this country on $9 and $10 oil, and $1.50 natural gas, and that made us very complacent about conservation. It made fuel costs very insignificant. But that has all changed, and it can continue to change.

If we have an energy plan in this country that meets our future economic needs, we need to have one that increases energy efficiency and conservation, one that ensures adequate energy supplies in generation, renew and expands the energy infrastructure. We need to encourage investment in energy technologies, provide energy assistance to low-income households, and

ensure appropriate consideration of the impacts of all the regulatory policies.

Mr. Speaker, I think there are a lot of things to do. These are all complicated issues. I am going to conclude my comments and then call on the gentlewoman from New Mexico, but just look at where we are at today.

Today, petroleum is 40 percent of our energy; natural gas is 23 percent; coal is 22 percent; nuclear is 8 percent; and renewables are 7 percent. We look down the road 19 years to the year 2020, and there is really not much change on those who are estimating.

□ 2030

Our gas usage will increase because we are now using a lot of gas for power generation, something we did not do, will go from 23 percent to 28 percent. Petroleum will drop from 40 percent to 39 percent. Coal will drop from 22 to 21 percent. Nuclear will drop from 8 to 5 percent. Renewables will remain at 7 percent. That is the projections of the Department of Energy. In my view, we have some very large issues that need to be dealt with. We have some mountains to climb if we are going to provide affordable energy to the American citizens.

With this I will call on my good friend from New Mexico (Mrs. WILSON).

Mrs. WILSON. I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania. I also thank him for hosting this 1-hour discussion this afternoon. We are actually on the eve of a very important debate here in the House, the first debate on a comprehensive energy plan for this country that has occurred here for 20 years. I think the leadership in this House, on both sides of the aisle, deserves a lot of credit for the work that has gone on over the last month to bring forward a very balanced and in many ways bipartisan bill that sets up a long-term energy policy for the country. It certainly has behind it the leadership of the President and Vice President CHENEY, and his administration that has put forward some ideas that were then worked on here in the House, in the Committee on Commerce, in the Committee on Science, in the Committee on Ways and Means to bring to the floor of the House tomorrow a comprehensive, long-term energy plan for the country.

This plan does not just rely on increased production; it also emphasizes conservation. But it recognizes that you have to do both. We cannot conserve our way out of the energy problem, but we cannot drill our way out of the energy problem, either. We have to have a long-term, balanced approach to our energy policy. I think the bill that we are bringing to the floor of the House tomorrow accomplishes that, and I think the leadership on both sides should be commended for all of their work in this area.

Most folks do not know that we are more dependent on foreign oil today than we were at the height of the energy crisis in the 1970s. We get 56 percent of our oil from abroad, mostly from the Mideast. The number six supplier of oil to the United States and the fastest growing supplier of oil to the United States is Saddam Hussein. America should not be that dependent on its enemies for its sources of oil. We are going to be even more dependent on them by 2010. Estimates are that two-thirds of our oil will come from abroad.

But it is not only oil that this bill is about. We are going to be increasing our consumption of natural gas; yet natural gas prices have soared over the last year to triple what they were a year before. We have had no nuclear plants licensed in this country for over 10 years. If we do not do something to make sure that nuclear power continues to be a viable option, continues to be part of our energy mix, then it will decline over the next 20 years. Yet nuclear power is the safest, most reliable source of energy that we have and emits no greenhouse gases. If we are going to have a balanced energy policy, nuclear power must be part of that equation.

We have not built any gasoline refineries in over 10 years in this country. We have put on these requirements, regional requirements, in some cases local requirements for what are called boutique fuels, different requirements from one city to another city about what kind of reformulated gas you have to use. It changes by the season, so you might have one formula of gas required in Milwaukee and another one in Chicago, and then it changes on different dates and you have filling stations having to drain their tanks and get the new gas. It creates local shortages.

In this bill we are bringing to the floor tomorrow, to the floor of the House, we will address this problem of boutique fuels that are causing gas-price spikes across the country. We need to expand our refining capacity so that if we have a fire or a pipe break at a refinery, we do not see everybody's gas prices go up in the West, particularly right in the summer when we need the gas most.

I think the bill that we will bring to the floor of the House tomorrow is a balanced and comprehensive bill. A lot of people, Democrats and Republicans here in the House, have worked very hard to make sure that it is so and it is a product we are all going to be able to be proud of when we leave here tomorrow night. I thank the gentleman for asking me to join him. I think this bill is very important for consumers in this country, to be confident that when you flick the switch, the lights go on and that when you go to the pump, you pay a reasonable price for the gas that you get, and the appliances that you buy are as efficient as they can be, so that people do not have to worry about these things because we prevent the next energy crunch from ever occurring.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. I thank the gentlewoman from New Mexico for her thoughtful comments.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS), a physicist of the body here, a man who is used to very complicated issues. I am interested to hear his views tonight of where he thinks America is in energy.

Mr. EHLERS. I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania. As he noted, I am a physicist, but I am going to try to keep this discussion very simple and not get into any complicated equations, although it would be fun to do that; but as you know, a physicist cannot think without a chalk board, and so I will not be able to do that tonight.

Energy, energy, energy, energy. That is all we are hearing these days, especially on the floor of the House. Tomorrow we are going to hear even more, energy, energy, energy, because for the first time in 20 years we will be talking about a new national energy policy.

What is the big fuss? Why are we so concerned about this? What is energy? What is it all about? Let me put it in the simplest terms I can. Energy represents the ability to do work and, to put it in even more simple terms, you get up in the morning, you say, oh, I feel full of energy today. That means you have got lots of vim and vigor, you are eager to work. You can do things. Or if you get up and say, oh, I'm really dragging today, it means you do not have much energy.

But where do we get our energy, our personal energy? From the food we eat. We may enjoy eating for other reasons, but the basic biological reason for eating is because we need the energy from the food that we eat.

For millennia, the people on this planet did not have any energy other than the energy from the food they ate. And so the work that they did, they had to do themselves, and their work was converting food energy into useful work. Agriculture developed only after people discovered how to use other than human energy, namely, animal energy. As soon as they could use animals to pump water, to pull the plows, to thresh the grain, then we began agriculture, because we had learned how to capture the energy of something other than ourselves.

Today throughout this world, over two-thirds of this world still thinks of the most basic form of energy as the most important, the energy in food, because they do not have enough to eat. And without enough to eat, they do not have enough energy to work. Without the energy to work, they have trouble producing enough food to feed themselves. But that brings us into another issue which we are not discussing here.

Throughout the ages, we have tried to do work, but to get other things to do the work. First human energy, then animal energy; then when we entered the industrial era, we found ways to use fossil fuels as energy. Extracting the energy which is really stored solar energy within the earth, we found that we could use that energy, whether it is coal, oil, natural gas. We could use

that to produce energy which allowed us to do work.

Physicists became involved in this about that time. In fact, you would not have had the Industrial Revolution without the work of physicists who developed the three laws of thermodynamics and allowed them to build very efficient engines, steam engines in particular, and that led later on to other engines. That meant we no longer depended on human energy; we no longer depended on animal energy. We then began to depend on energy recovered from artificial sources, fossil fuels in this case. And then later on we developed nuclear energy with Einstein's discovery that E=MC2, in other words, you could convert matter into energy which is what a nuclear reactor does. All of this represents the ability to do work, and that is what it is all about.

But how does that affect us today? It affects us in so many ways we do not even begin to realize it. We walk in the house, we flick the light switch, the light goes on, where did that energy come from? Not from the switch, not from the wires, although that transmitted it there. It came from a power plant, either nuclear, gas-fired or coal-fired that converted energy from that form into a very usable form of electricity.

Suppose we want to go to the store and get some groceries. It takes very little energy for those groceries to get from the store to our home, because they are fairly light, a few pounds, 10 pounds, 15 pounds. It does not even take that much energy for us to get to the store and back home. We could walk it if we had to. But we take our car, and it takes a lot of energy to get that car to the store and back. If you do not believe that, next time you go into the store, do not drive your car there, push it and see how much energy you use just moving that car around. That is where our major sources of energy are today, not in feeding ourselves, not in manual work but in all the many things we have to do work for us.

Every one of those things cost money. But they are also totally essential to the economy we have. Sometimes we do not realize it, but it is no secret why every shortage of energy was followed by a recession or at least an economic slowdown. This happened in 1973 with the shortage then, in the early 1980s, roughly in 1990, and now today energy prices went up, we now are in an economic slowdown. There is a cause and effect there, because energy is so vital to our economy. We do not even recognize it, but it is and that controls our fates to a large extent. Why is that?

Suppose you want to manufacture something. It could be a tin can; it could be a car. Sometimes it is hard to tell the difference. But in any event to start with, you have to dig a hole in the ground to get at the ore, the iron ore, or the aluminum ore, whatever you may have. That takes energy to dig that hole. It takes energy to take the ore out. It takes energy to transport it to the smelting plant, to purify it and make it into ingots. Once again it takes energy to transfer it to a rolling mill where it gets rolled into steel or aluminum. It takes energy to transport that rolled steel or aluminum to the factory. It takes energy to fabricate it into the tin can or to the car, and then it takes energy to transport the tin can or the car to your home. Every single step of the way requires the use of energy. That is why we are so totally dependent on energy.

But why do we not recognize this? For a very simple reason: energy is intangible. We cannot see it, we cannot touch it, we cannot perceive it. It is not like a material resource. In fact, it is totally different from a material resource. And so we are using this energy that we do not understand, we cannot see, and we cannot see the effects of very easily. How do we know it is there? One tangible way is the price at the gas pump. And so we get very upset when that price goes up. That means energy is in shorter supply. Our utility bill is another tangible evidence. But we do not see it and we do not feel it; we do not recognize its effect in our lives.

That is why it is so extremely important that President Bush took it upon himself to try to develop a national energy plan. He knows about energy. He has been in the oil business. He understands the importance of energy. I have wanted an energy plan for this Nation for a long time, but it has been very hard to get the attention of the people without a shortage of energy. We had a shortage of energy this year. We still have looming potential shortages of energy, as you can see from this chart that the gentlewoman from New Mexico used; and we have to be aware of that. We have to try to develop new sources of energy at reasonable cost. Energy is so important that we absolutely need a good energy policy.

Tomorrow, the House of Representatives will debate such a policy. It has taken months of work, first on the part of the Vice President and his working group, secondly the support and work of the President, and now it is in the hands of the Congress. We have spent months working on it in different committees, conducting hearings, learning from the experts, trying to put together a package that has all the essential elements. There has been a lot of disagreement. There are a lot of different ideas of how to approach it. Some want to drill for more oil; some want to import oil from Canada and natural gas so we can make use of their resources and also from Mexico. Others want alternative sources of energy. Others say, let us conserve more. The point is, we have to do all of the above.

The President's energy plan does all of the above. You may still quibble and say, well, there is not enough conservation, or there is too much of this, there is too much of that.

□ 2045

That is something we will continue to work on. The important factor is we have an energy plan here before us. It represents the hard work of the administration and the Congress. It is up to us to pass that energy plan, to educate the people of our Nation about the nature of energy and how important it is and how it should be used.

I urge my colleagues tomorrow as we discuss this issue that we not lose sight of the main goal, and that is to develop an energy plan and policy for the United States which will benefit every single one of us.

So I urge that we all work together and adopt this plan, and I hope the Senate will join us in this so that we can have a good plan for the future and not run into the pit that was outlined by the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Mrs. WILSON) of becoming dependent on Saddam Hussein and other dictators who control oil, and that we can develop low-cost, dependable sources of energy of various types, both new ones and existing ones, so that the people of this country will once again enjoy a good economy.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Michigan for his wise words. You can tell the gentleman is a physicist by his thought processes.

We are delighted to be joined now by the gentlewoman from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO), who comes from what I would call coal country.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much. It is a pleasure to be here this evening to talk about the impending energy legislation that will be before us tomorrow.

I was listening to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) discuss his definition of energy: When you wake up in the morning you feel energized, or sometimes you do not feel so energized.

When I think about this energy plan, another word comes to mind to me, and that is balance. I think as a new Congresswoman, I am trying to learn myself how to balance things in my life; how to balance my work with my leisure, if I have any, and my family, in my new surroundings here in Washington. It is a matter of making choices, it is a matter of setting priorities, and it is a matter of being realistic about what is before me as a new Congresswoman. I see the new energy plan much in the same way.

For the past 20 years, America has coasted blindly into the future, naively trusting that our sufficient resources would be ready and available whenever we would need them. But we know the recent blackouts in California and serious fluctuations in the prices of gasoline have shown that our well of energy has dried up a bit.

Fortunately, we have an administration before us now with President Bush and Vice President Cheney who have compiled a plan that is balanced and comprehensive, and it provides for our energy in a safe and clean manner.

The Bush plan calls for increased production, but it also calls for greater technology, greater research and development, and also has a large component of conservation, there again, striking a balance between all the elements. Not only will this help protect the American consumer from future blackouts and huge electricity price spikes, but, for me, living in West Virginia, one of the bonuses is it will create more jobs. That is welcome news for us as West Virginians.

We see the depth of the diversity in the plan in the amount of research in funding that goes to green energy, a new resource, and alternate sources such as biomass. There is an expansion of the biomass tax credit and more funding for biopower energy programs.

The reason I bring this up, even though coal is a great part of what I want to talk about, just last week a few of my constituents came in to see me about implementing a potential biomass energy production project in my district. Because our State of West Virginia also has a large timber industry, they proposed using the energy from the wood scraps and the leftover wood by-products to provide local power. Their proposal, I thought, was very impressive. They were creating green power out of what has basically been and formerly been a waste product from the timber industry. They have a wonderful idea of how to use another West Virginia resource in an environmentally clean way and to provide for that basic need, energy.

Aside from being environmentally friendly, the use of this type of energy positively impacts our local rural economies. For instance, to transport the timber would be very expensive, so you place the power plant very close to the fuel crop of timber, and then you can use that raw material to generate green power. This creates a new plant and jobs in the community.

The Bush energy plan directs more time and resources to exploring these projects and others like them. For instance, about a month ago I went to West Virginia State College, a college in my district, in Institute, West Virginia. They had just imported from another area in my district, Moorefield, that has quite a few chicken farms, and they had imported a digester. They are taking the chicken by-products and with the digester using them to create power, small levels of power, but enough to power the football field, some of the athletic facilities, at West Virginia State College. It is experimental, but, there again, a different approach to creating energy.

In addition to producing more alternative fuels like biomass, we see more production in this plan for the traditional sources of power. Another one we have in abundance in West Virginia is natural gas. We are one of the largest exporters of natural gas in the whole country. We are digging deeper and becoming more productive in our ways of getting natural gas.

This energy plan we have before us has a large component of natural gas. I think the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PETERSON) mentioned in his opening statement that natural gas is still the largest fuel used for energy.

I would like to turn to coal. With 35.4 billion tons of coal in reserve, West Virginia has a ripe opportunity to help in this time of a national energy crunch. The amount of coal that lays sleeping in our West Virginia hills amounts to $4.5 trillion in value.

Last year in West Virginia the coal industry alone employed 21,000 West Virginians, up almost 4 percent from a year ago. It is clear that increasing production of this resource would be good for economic development in West Virginia, a state that is always searching for more jobs.

Last year in West Virginia in the transportation and public utilities industry we employed 37,000 people. Well, with new clean coal technology and an advanced way to burn and use our coal more efficiently, not only would we have more coal production, but we would also have offshoots of this, like transportation in the construction industry. A plan that calls for more production of energy resources, more construction of power plants, and more infrastructure will make these 70,000 employees more productive and more useful.

I see a tremendous amount of potential in this energy plan, because it is balanced. We are not finding one solution to a very large problem; we are looking at a myriad of solutions to try to meet an enormous problem and to face the future of the next at least 25 to 30 years.

I think timing is everything in politics, they say, and I think in terms of facing energy needs, there could be no more timeliness than the present moment. America cannot walk blindly into the future and naively assume, I think as we have in the past, that our children's energy needs will be met. We must have long-term vision and must plan not only to produce, we must learn to conserve, and we must learn now to act tomorrow to implement what I think is an innovative, exciting energy plan for the country.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from West Virginia for her very thoughtful comments, especially about coal.

We are now joined by our friend the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CANNON). Welcome to our discussion on energy.

Mr. CANNON. I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PETERSON). I thank my friend from Pennsylvania, another coal state, for his time here. And while I think it is very important that we produce green energy, I really love coal, and it is what fires America, keeps our lights on.

I want to say H.R. 4 is a carefully crafted bill that balances energy conservation and increased production. It is the product of the work of the gentleman from Utah (Chairman HANSEN), the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. TAUZIN) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. BOEHLERT), and it is one that we should all support for the good of our Nation.

I do believe there is a need for additional work on an important facet of our country's energy policy, the role that American Indian and Native Alaska Tribal Governments can play in the development of new energy resources. Some tribes, like the Utes in my district in Utah, are ideally located on or near oil, shale, coal, petroleum or natural gas reserves, and others have the good fortune of being located near the power grid and thus could easily become energy producers.

Indian energy also provides an opportunity for us in Congress to put our money where our mouths are when it comes to tribal sovereignty and economic independence. Many of my friends on both sides of the aisle are concerned about the increasing dependence on gaming as a means of economic development for Indian country.

None of us in this chamber want to see Tribal governments relying on gaming solely for job creation and economic empowerment. Indeed, I think I speak for many of us in saying that we would like to broaden the economies of Indian Tribes so that gaming becomes less and less important over time.

Energy production is the ideal opportunity to fulfill our trust responsibilities to these local governments and provide Tribes with the tools to help their members, but how do we do that? One answer is to establish more Federal bureaucracies that, while well-intended, often create more burdens than benefits. Such solutions often do more harm than good by furthering Federal paternalism that undermines the concept of sovereignty. Rather than create more bureaucracies, we must ensure that the President's recent order to reduce regulatory barriers to energy production also applies to the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

But we should consider doing more. Many proposals to date have overlooked key issues, and instead provide for new Federal programs and loan guarantees that do not address the full spectrum of energy issues.

We should look to streamlining the process for Tribes to take lands into trust, specifically for energy production, so long as the local communities continue to have input into such acquisitions. We should also consider allowing Tribal governments to do their own environmental assessments, rather than having to rely on the Federal bureaucracy in Washington, D.C. Congress should consider whether, as sovereign governments, Tribes should have licensing and permitting authority for Federal production facilities.

Most of all, Mr. Speaker, we must fully consult with Tribal governments to see what they feel is necessary to encourage the development of new energy sources on Indian lands.

I look forward in the weeks and months to come to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle and our friends in the Native American community. Specifically I hope to move legislation in the Committee on Resources that will promote Tribal sovereignty and self-sufficiency while fostering meaningful economic development.

I would like to thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania for his efforts.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, we thank the gentleman from Utah. We hear now an Indian perspective of energy potential also.

We are really covering the country tonight, from one end of the country to the other. We are now at the far West Coast, where there have been real challenging, interesting energy problems.

I yield to my good friend, the gentleman from California (Mr. RADANOVICH).

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. I think together we represent both the East and West Coast versions of national energy. I want to thank the gentleman for providing this time.

Also I want to thank the President of the United States for putting together an energy policy for this country, because it has been so long overdue and so important. I thank him for providing the leadership on this issue. So much can be done when you are President of the United States, and yet so many presidents I think tend to look at what the polls are and judge their administrative actions and their job as president by what the polls dictate.

We had a similar situation like that in California about a year ago, last May, when it looked like it began to become apparent that a law that was passed in 1995, a phony deregulation bill, I guess I would call it, began to show signs of wear and tear on energy in California. Consequently, the prices of energy in California began to kind of jump through the roof, starting in San Diego.

Unfortunately, the leadership in California looked at the polls, and the polls said that if you did what was necessary, you might suffer in your polls, at least on a temporary basis, because the remedy for that was a very, very modest increase. About a year ago it would have been something like 20 to 25 percent in power rates would have brought things back in line, in addition to negotiating long-term contracts in California. It would have corrected the flaws in this 1995 deregulation bill.

Because that leadership was not provided in California, of course, we began to be familiar with the terms ''rolling blackouts'' and ''price spikes'' and ''$3,800 power,'' these kinds of things. It was because the leadership was not provided at the State level.

It makes me more appreciative of this president, the fact he has come up to the plate and decided to take on issues that may not be all that popular. But they need to be addressed in this country. Because as in California, and we are thankful that the temperatures have not gotten too hot, that we have not had the rolling blackouts, yet, that we had anticipated for this summer, but the threat is still there, and because the President is tackling I think the energy situation in the United States, I think it will save a lot of the rest of the country what California has had to go through in learning tough lessons.

So, the President is providing the leadership, and I think it is up to us in the House to pass his package, which I fully support. It is a balanced package. It is not over reliant on any one type of energy. It spreads our liability through many, and also makes us more dependent on our own resources, which I think is really the moral thing to do in the United States.

As much as we do not like a power plant perhaps in our backyard, we certainly do like to flip the switch and see the lights come on, and we certainly do like to turn the faucet and see water come out of it. That is the bottom line for the United States.

So, again, I applaud the President. I think he is doing a great job in his policy. I support this energy plan, and I look forward to its passage in the House tomorrow.

□ 2100

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman from Pennsylvania yielding me time.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I would ask the gentleman, what kind of electric cost increases are happening in California?

Mr. RADANOVICH. Right now, because the Governor waited so long to do any price increases, the PUC eventually raised prices up to about 48 percent. We have a home in California and pay generally when we are not there about $48 a month, and it went up to about, in our particular case, almost $200 a month, even when we are not there on occasion, and so the price increases are very steep in California.

Californians are beginning to feel that right now. But they should know that had the Governor acted earlier, the price increases would have only been about 20 to 25 percent and would have corrected the problem and, frankly, saved the State billions of dollars, at least $8 billion, probably $20 billion.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Well, the energy prices are important ones to ourselves, along with our traveling costs and our home costs. But we pay them again in our education costs, we pay them again in our health care costs. And in business, we pay them again in business; if one owns a business, that is a high energy user, so it hits us a lot of ways when energy prices spike that much.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Well, there is a good side, if we want to call it that, to price increases in that it does cause us to conserve energy. Price increases, unfortunately, are the best conservation method there is out there. But, there is a big difference between 20 and 25 percent and a 48 percent increase. It really was not necessary to raise rates that high had he acted earlier in order to affect the kind of savings that we actually could get in California.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. The other issue is, I remember rolling brownouts during a winter a few years ago when energy was short in Pennsylvania and it was zero degree weather and the problems that were caused when electric was off just for a few hours. Maybe the gentleman could share with us a little bit about what happened. I heard there were industries that were actually deprived power.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Oh, there are. When a rolling blackout happens, unless you are in a district near a hospital somewhere, then you are not protected. And even in that case, you are not protected from some medical emergencies. We had an ophthalmologist, who was doing cataract surgery, in the middle of cataract surgery when the lights went out and they struggled around for about 30 to 60 seconds before they could get their private generators going. The gentleman can imagine, if you are in the chair and you are getting cataract surgery, I assume that you are awake during this whole time, and all of a sudden the power goes out on you.

We also have one of the largest plate glass manufacturing plants if the country. There are about four of them all over the place that use enormous amounts of energy and, of course, in order to make glass, you have to heat it up to where it becomes molten and then it goes through a lot of sophisticated equipment before it comes out as plate glass. When you have a power outage for 8 hours, all of that molten stuff freezes up inside all of that sophisticated machinery and you lose every bit of it.

So these companies in California have been scrambling to make sure that they have an alternative energy supply to click on real fast once we do get a blackout. This generally makes us more reliant on power sources that are not necessarily energy efficient and environmentally efficient. So generally, what we rely on are power plants that pollute the air more than what we want, certainly, or should allow, and cause, I think, more environmental damage in California.

So it is not a good position to be in if one is an energy user or one is concerned about the environment. It kind of swings both ways.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, economically, it may take a little while, but when a company in California or any State that has a prolonged energy spikes and the rest of the country does not, we have put that company in a noncompetitive position immediately and, in time, they will not be able to compete with companies that are using a lot more less costly power.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Right. And in California, we pride ourselves as being the seventh largest economy in the world. We rank up there with nations. We are very, very proud of that. But we cannot last long like that if we cannot even supply the basics. This is basic infrastructure we are talking about at an affordable price. When it is more affordable in any other State in the country, business will leave. It will drastically affect the economy of California. So these are the concerns that we have, of course, because being a Californian and those of us that live there, we care about our State and we want to make sure that we get through this reasonably well. But it has vast economic impacts.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, just to look at a few of the spikes that were regional in the last few years. In 1999, the fuel oil, truck fuel price was, in the East, from about Pennsylvania up to New England and for most of the winter, trucking companies were calling me and going out of business because they could not compete with their competitors because their fuel prices had doubled. But they were regional problems.

Then, in the year 2000, in Chicago and many areas that had the huge gasoline peaks and gasoline prices there and I think they were over $2 a gallon. Last winter, the changes, because of the problem the gentleman is having in California, and 95 percent of the new generation for electricity is natural gas. Historically in this country, we did not use natural gas for power generation. Maybe a little bit of peaking, but not regular power generation.

It was basically saved for home fuel and for commercial industrial, as the easy, clean fuel. So now that we are major into using natural gas for power generation, we have spiked the price. Because last winter, gas prices in my part of the country were up 120 percent for home heating. Now, that took a lot of money out of spendable income.

A lot of people have not talked too much about it, but last November and December in this country were the coldest Novembers and Decembers in history since they have been keeping track of temperatures. So they were not real cold temperatures, but they were cold every day of the month, each month. They were very cold months, the coldest on record. So there was tremendous natural gas use and there was inadequate supplies in storage, because they put natural gas in the ground in the summertime in storage caverns and then they use it in the winter.

So last winter, we had gas prices running $2 and something a thousand retail, they went to $8, $9, and $10 a thousand. In my district I actually lost businesses who depend on natural gas, who are heavy gas users; and we had a fallout from that. I had a company relocating to Louisiana, and another one went out of business because they no longer were competitive because of the natural gas prices.

I think with this great consumption of natural gas now for power generation, until the drilling can catch up, until the gas lines, the transmission lines can be built, in my view, natural gas spikes a couple of winters in a row can really have a huge impact on seniors staying in their homes.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Right. Mr. Speaker, that is why I think the President's plan is wise, because it relies on diversifying our energy sources.

We in California are far too reliant on natural gas, as the gentleman mentioned, and one can never put all our eggs in one basket and not expect to suffer at some point in time. So that is why I applaud the President for not just concentrating on say natural gas reserves or supplies, but also on some of the other Nation's resources, like coal reserves, renewable energy sources, nuclear energy and such. Those are all, I think maybe not equally dependent on all of them, but they all have to be a good part of our energy mix, and that is why I applaud the President for making sure that that is a part of this energy plan.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I think we all should be applauding the President for raising this issue, because it was not a popular political issue, but it is an issue that needs to be addressed. Because if America is going to grow, and our energy use is growing, but maybe we do not give ourselves enough credit. But while the economy in this country grew 126 percent, energy use grew 30 percent. So we have improved our efficiency, we have done that, very much so. But we need to continue to do so.

Now, $10 oil and $1.50 gas a few years ago kind of took our eyes off the ball. It made all other forms of energy noncompetitive. We could not compete with cheap gas and cheap oil. Now, if the prices do not get too high, but stay stably high to where other energies can compete with them, wind and solar and geothermal and fuel cells have a chance of competing in areas, so they can become a bigger factor when they can compete pricewise.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Right. And I think that conservation and renewable energy sources play a big part in the President's overall energy plan. But if we are going to deal with things realistically, we have to understand that a large portion of our energy is consumed by oil, natural gas, and hopefully, a greater percentage of nuclear energy.

Right now, the technology says that these are our main energy sources. And we can hedge those and help cut back on those by renewable energy sources and conservation, but it all has to work together. The gentleman has the graph, and a large part is oil and natural gas.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I will give the gentleman the figures here. This is the Department of Energy. This is interesting. I will give the gentleman the change.

Currently, 22 percent of our energy is from coal, and they are predicting it will be 21 percent in the year 2020, that is 19 more years. Oil is currently 40 percent and will decrease only to 39 percent. Natural gas is the growth area. It is going to go from 23 to 28 percent. And nuclear they show dropping from 8 percent of our energy source to 5 percent, and they show renewable staying at 7. Now, that will be growth in renewables, but only as much as the growth in energy consumption, because the percentage is not changing.

Now, I hope we can do better than that. I hope renewables could double. But if we double renewables in the next 20 years, we would still only be 14 percent of our overall energy use.

One issue I wanted to mention on natural gas too; now, in oil, as we stop producing enough oil to run our economy, we then started to import from all over the world. We import from like 20 different parts of the world. Unfortunately, a lot of it is from unstable parts of the world that are not real friendly to us. But natural gas, we only import from two countries, Mexico and Canada, where we do it on pipeline. We do import a little bit of natural gas, but it has to be liquefied and I think there is only one port in the United States that can accept tankers of liquefied natural gas, liquefied natural gas from other parts of the world. That is the only way you can transport it is to turn it into liquid and then turn it back into gas again, and we only have one port.

So we cannot import natural gas like we can import oil. Only from Canada and Mexico. We are 80-some percent self-sufficient ourselves currently, but with the amount of power plants we are hooking up; when we hook up a power plant, it takes a lot of gas wells to fill up that pipeline to supply that power plant. So in my view, the next year or two, the amount of natural gas we can have on hand is going to be very important to make sure we do not have spikes in natural gas prices that would push our seniors out of their homes and push businesses out of business.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, if I may use a little bit of the gentleman's time to comment on one thing that I think will come up in tomorrow's debate on the energy plan and that is on the issue of price caps. As the gentleman knows, we have been facing that in California quite often; and we have deliberated over it many, many hours when we were putting together this energy plan.

As a result, FERC, the Energy Regulatory Commission, came up with what they call the 7–24, which is a 24-hour, 7-day-a-week price mitigation observation on the market to make sure that if there were any overcharges that they would all be susceptible to refund. After that imposition, it was interesting, because in California, the ISO, the unit that purchases the energy for California now, out of the Department of Water Resources, had the opportunity, or they were buying power at

$80 a megawatt from a hydro facility up in the Northwestern United States, I believe it was up in Washington. They could have enacted the price mitigation measures that were passed by FERC which would have dropped it down to $40 a megawatt, which was basically the cap that was set.

The ISO refused to enact on that cap. Even though the leaders in California were wanting to make sure that they had a price cap, they refused to enact the price cap when they had the ability to do it, because the hydro facility in the Northwest would have kept the water behind the dam for their own use later on, or they could have gone somewhere and sold it at a higher price.

This was the real fallacy, I think, behind price caps, because you could never have price caps in California unless you had a for sale agreement in the western grid, which means you would have been calling upon States like Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana to suffer while California would not suffer in price increases or energy reliability, and yet those States that are giving away their hydropower would be suffering higher prices and an increased percentage of blackouts.

So it really was a fallacy, and I think it is showing itself to be proven in California now. I am saying this now because this issue is going to come up tomorrow in our debates; I believe that there will be an amendment on price caps. In a free system like what we have, it does not work; and unfortunately, we make other people suffer by even more blackouts and higher prices.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, foolish price controls really caused much of California's problems.

Mr. RADANOVICH. They did, yes.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I want to go into one more issue that we have not talked about here and that is ANWR. And that is the one a lot of people are cautious about talking about, but I am not. With the improvements in technology, it will allow us to develop with very little impact on the environment, and we can drill directionally from gravel pads on the surface, roads to drilling sites would be constructed only on ice and would melt in the spring when the snow melts.

□ 2115

We are only going to drill on 2,000 acres of ANWR, when there is actually 19.6 million acres. We are only going to be drilling on 14 percent of Alaska's coastline. So we are not going to endanger all of Alaska, like some people think; and we will have a minimal impact.

The interesting thing is that because of the tremendous reserves there, every well we drill there, and there are two different charts of production in the lower 48 and in Alaska. One chart says 45 wells would have to be drilled in the lower 48 to replace one well in Alaska; the other one would be 70. I personally think the 70 figure is the most accurate.

The U.S. Geological Survey did a study. It came up to 16 billion barrels of oil were available in ANWR. That is enough to replace oil we import from Iraq for 58 years. I see now they are the sixth largest import country.

The opponents would argue that ANWR oil would only supply the U.S. for 180 days. This would only be true if we immediately stopped all other sources of oil, if it was our only source of oil; and we know that is not the case.

Seventy-five percent of Alaskans support it. They know the issue best. Prudhoe Bay, everybody who has been there has said we can drill there safely without harming the environment. We have been drilling there for 25 years. Environmental groups claim it will harm the caribou. They have increased five-fold in Prudhoe Bay since drilling began there in the seventies. Nature and hunters are more of a threat to wildlife than drilling.

ANWR development would create 736,000 new jobs. ANWR is the largest oil accumulation anywhere in the world. Only 14 percent of Alaska's Arctic shoreline would be open to exploration overall. Opponents say 95, but that is not true. Opponents say 5 percent is protected, but actually 86 percent is protected.

The pipeline from Prudhoe Bay is in place. We just have to extend from ANWR to Prudhoe Bay and the pipeline is there. There is also a great source of natural gas there; but again, our problem is how do we get it here.

The ANWR issue is one that I think needs to be looked at very carefully. I personally support it. I think it is better to drill one well in Alaska instead of 70 someplace else. With a pipeline in place, the infrastructure in place, it just makes sense.

Mr. RADANOVICH. I have to say if the North Slope were a Third World country, we would already be using those resources, and in a way that was far more harmful to the environment than under the President's plan right now.

It is unfortunate, but Americans consume 25 percent of the energy consumed on the Earth. Yet we only provide about 2 percent from our own natural resources. To me it is very hypocritical when we are that willing to consume that much; yet we are less willing to use our own resources to do it.

The fact is, if the North Slope were a Third World country, we would be exploiting that oil right now; and the environmental standards would be lower than the ones we are placing on it at this time.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. I think this energy plan is going to diversify us. We are far too dependent. Our largest dependence is 40 percent on oil.

I think we need to lower that percentage, because we only have somewhere between 2 and 3 percent of the world's oil in this country under our own control, when we have 45 percent of the world's coal, we have a lot of our own natural gas, we are producing 80-some percent of our own natural gas without imports.

Mr. RADANOVICH. I think if the gentleman were to go to the coldest, most barren, desolate, unappealing part of the world, that would be the North Slope. I think because so many people have not been there, there is this assumption that caribou are running wild among mountains and there are streams and waterfalls and everything.

This is not an appealing place. I think people need to remember that, that it is not representative of the beautiful State of Alaska at all. This is a cold, barren, desolate place that we would not want to be there.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. The animals are only there a few months of the year.

Back to the other issues, in Penn State they have new research that has been very successful at making jet fuel out of coal. They also get a carbon product that could be used in the carbon industries. That is moving to refinery development this year.

They also have some coal boilers that interest me. They have one that would burn gas, powdered coal, or oil. Think if a factory, hospital or business had the ability to burn any one of those three fuels cleanly. And the clean technology is with us; the scrubbers and all the equipment is with this boiler.

Now if you are a business person, a hospital, or one of our educational facilities, we buy the fuel that is the cheapest. We are not in bondage to any one fuel. They also have the fluidized bed boiler that we are utilizing in Pennsylvania a lot for burning our old waste coal piles, with high sulfur and very low Btu. The waste coal was piled on top of the ground. We are now burning and getting rid of it because it was an environmental hazard.

The fluidized bed process will allow us to burn almost anything, that process where we use crushed limestone with whatever we burn, and the limestone locks up with the pollutants. Then with the scrubbers, we really have a very fuel-efficient and a very clean burn.

That is another type of burner that I think we ought to be promoting, because again, we could burn coal and animal waste, or oil, a blend of oil and coal. We could burn whatever was cost effective. In some cases it might be animal waste, animal fat, or different things we know are problematic today to dispose of, they could be burned as fuels. They are doing some very interesting research at our universities to help us diversify our energy needs.

Mr. RADANOVICH. All due to increased technology.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. We are in the technology wave.

It is about time to wrap this up. Let us quickly go over the chart down front, America's energy situation. Foreign oil dependence is now 56, and we

will be 66 in 10 years. Natural gas prices soared to triple last year's prices, which caused home heating last year in my area to be a real pain and caused some businesses to go out of business.

No new gasoline refineries built in 10 years; no new nuclear plants licensed in over 10 years. There is new nuclear technology today that is much superior to the past, not nearly as expensive to put in place.

No new coal plants built in 10 years. There is a new one being built in Pennsylvania right now. It is going to be using, again, waste coal that is on top of the ground already.

Gas and electric transmission capacity is overloaded.

Those are some of the problems. Anyone who says we do not have energy problems in this country, we have distribution problems and access problems. As we said in the beginning, for energy to be affordable and available to people and businesses, we need strong, ample supplies of each and every kind of energy. And we need to develop a system that is not so dependent on oil, not so dependent on one fuel, but gives people alternatives. Then people that use a lot of fuel in a business could choose the fuel that is the cheapest for the day.

We have the technology to do it cleanly. We need to, as time goes along, to grow the renewables. I think fuel cells are a great potential. There will be slight growth in wind and solar. I do not think they will be major players. Geothermal has some potential.

None of those will put enough into the system to even take care of our growth in energy needs. Fuel efficiency, conservation and fuel efficiency, can only take up half of the slack of the energy-need growth, so we have to have more energy and a system to deliver it.

Mr. RADANOVICH. I want to thank the President for bringing to the Congress his energy plan, and I hope we pass it tomorrow by wide margins.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. I do, too. I thank the gentleman from California, a good friend. So from the east coast to the west coast, we will join hands and hopefully can bring this one home for the people of this country.

I thank all who participated tonight to talk about energy, an issue that is number one in this country and one that I commend President Bush and Vice President CHENEY for having the courage to tackle.

It is our future. Energy is what runs this country; and we must have abundant supplies, a delivery system, and we must use it wisely.

HMO REFORM AND THE REAL PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHUSTER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, this evening I plan to talk about HMO reform and what I call the real Patients' Bill of Rights.

Mr. Speaker, I have been here many times before in the last few weeks and even in the last few years to talk about this issue, because I do think it is so important to the American people. We know about many abuses that have occurred within managed care where people have HMOs as their insurance; and frankly, almost a day does not pass by without somebody mentioning to me the problems that they have had with HMOs.

Over the last few years our concern over this, particularly in our Health Care Task Force on the Democratic side, has manifested itself by supporting a bill called the Patients' Bill of Rights, which is sponsored by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL), a Democrat, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. GANSKE), and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. NORWOOD), who happen to be two Republicans.

We had a vote in the House of Representatives in the last session of Congress, at which time almost every Democrat supported the Patients' Bill of Rights, and 68 Republicans also supported it. Unfortunately, the Republican leadership here in the House of Representatives has never supported the bill, and continues to oppose it. Also unfortunately, now President Bush has indicated since he took office his opposition to this legislation.

What is happening now is that we had a commitment from the Speaker to bring up the Patients' Bill of Rights over the last few weeks, and specifically last week; but he announced last week that that vote was postponed and delayed because the votes did not exist for an alternative HMO reform bill sponsored by the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. FLETCHER).

I hate to say it, Mr. Speaker, but the bottom line is that this alternative Fletcher bill is not a real Patients' Bill of Rights; it is a much weaker version, if you will, of HMO reform. I could make a very good case for saying that it does not accomplish anything at all and continues the status quo.

What we hear today is that the Republican leadership plans to bring up HMO reform on Thursday of this week. In fact, in just a few hours there might actually be a markup in the Committee on Rules on the legislation.

But again, the issue, Mr. Speaker, is what are we going to be able to vote on. Will we be able to vote on the real Patients' Bill of Rights, the Dingell-Ganske-Norwood bill, or are we going to see the Fletcher alternative or some other weakening effort, so we do not have a clean vote on the Patients' Bill of Rights?

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, I was reading in Congress Daily, the publication that we receive about what is going on on Capitol Hill. It actually indicates tonight that the Republican plan is to somehow separate out various pieces of the Fletcher bill and propose them as amendments to the real Patients' Bill of Rights.

I do not really know what the Republicans' procedure is going to be; but if this is the case, once again, it is a sort of insidious way of trying to kill the real Patients' Bill of Rights.

The Congress Daily says that ''likely amendments include the Fletcher liability provisions, an access package of proposals seeking to expand insurance, possibly an amendment replacing the bipartisan bill's patient protections with those in the Fletcher bill. Also possible is an amendment to impose caps on medical malpractice awards.''

Let me tell the Members, if any of these things do in fact happen, if this is how the Republican leadership intends to proceed, it once again indicates that they are not in favor of a real Patients' Bill of Rights; that they are not making an effort to bring up this bill, but rather, to kill the bill. I think that is very unfortunate.

I have some of my colleagues here, and I will yield to them. But I just wanted to point out why this Fletcher bill is nothing more than a fig leaf for real HMO reform. It is an effort essentially to peel off votes from the bipartisan Patients' Bill of Rights and undermine the effort to pass real HMO reform this year.

Just as an example, the Fletcher bill contains almost no protections for patients; and it gives patients almost no ability to appeal their HMO's decisions to an independent panel, or to take HMOs to court when they are denied treatment or harmed in any other way.

The real key to HMO reform that is personified, if you will, that is manifested in the Patients' Bill of Rights, the Dingell-Ganske-Norwood bill, is the ability to say that your physician and you as a patient would make decisions about what kind of medical care you get, not the insurance company.

The second most important aspect of the real Patients' Bill of Rights is that if one is denied care because the HMO does not want to give it to us, we have a right to redress our grievances and go to an independent panel, separate and independent of the HMO, to overturn that initial decision. If the Fletcher bill basically does not accomplish those goals, which it does not, then it does not achieve real HMO reform.

I have a lot of other things that I could talk about this evening, and hopefully that we will get to, but I have two of my colleagues here who happen to be both of them from the State of Texas. The State of Texas has a real Patients' Bill of Rights in effect. It has had that since 1997.

I heard some of my Republican colleagues on the other side of this issue say, We do not want the Dingell-Norwood-Ganske bill to pass because if it does, it will mean there will be a lot more lawsuits. The cost of health care will go up, health insurance will go up,