

we see the same results: lost jobs, a weakened economy, lower standards of living in Mexico, bad environmental outcomes. But this Congress somehow barely in the middle of the night continues to pass these trade agreements, and we see the same bad results.

But do not take my word for it. Look at the numbers. The U.S. economy, with a \$10 trillion GDP in 2002, is 170 times bigger than the economies of the CAFTA nations, at about \$62 billion combined. It is like comparing a bowling ball that weighs 170 times a slice of bread.

CAFTA is not about robust markets for the export of American goods. It is about outsourcing. It is about access to cheap labor. We send our jobs overseas. Workers overseas get paid almost nothing, not enabling them to raise their standard of living even a bit. U.S. corporations make more money. American workers lose their jobs. It is the same old story time and time again.

Again, the combined purchasing power of the CAFTA nations is about that of Columbus, Ohio, or Orlando, Florida, or the entire State of Kansas. Trade pacts like NAFTA and CAFTA enable companies to exploit cheap labor in other countries in the developing world, then import their products back into the United States under favorable tariff terms.

American companies outsource their jobs to Guatemala, outsource their jobs to China, outsource their jobs to Mexico. It costs American workers their jobs. It does almost nothing for workers in those countries. Yet profits at Wal-Mart and GM and so many other companies continue to rise.

CAFTA will do nothing to stop the bleeding of manufacturing jobs except make it worse. It will do even less to create a strong Central American consumer market for American goods.

Throughout the developing world, workers do not share in the wealth they create. Our decades of economic success in this country show that employees share in the wealth they create for their employer. If one works at GM, they help GM create wealth; they help GM make a profit. They get some of that money back. These trade agreements in the developing world simply do not work, and when the world's poorest people can buy American products rather than just make them, then we will know our trade agreements finally are working.

Vote "no" on the Central American Free Trade Agreement.

#### ENERGY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, we commemorate Earth Day at a time when American soldiers are in Iraq, in part as a consequence of our energy dependence. No matter what the press re-

leases say, the way this Congress is commemorating Earth Day is by recycling the energy bill.

It is replete with massive subsidies that will continue to tie us to the past. Rather than the development of true energy independence gained by working with renewables and a massive effort at energy conservation, this energy bill is a monument to Congress's inability to think comprehensively about the future. Our energy dependence and wasteful policies mean that we are desperately dependent on a volatile Middle East, especially Iraq and Saudi Arabia, as we spend a major portion of our defense budget protecting the stability in that oil-rich region.

The Pentagon is also the largest single consumer of fuel in the United States, almost 2 percent of the country's total transportation fuel. And much of this fuel use is due to highly inefficient vehicles, from an Abrams tank, weighing 68 tons, that gets only about half a mile to a gallon, to an aircraft carrier that gets 17 feet to a gallon.

The United States military now uses 1.7 million gallons of fuel a day in Iraq. The cost of this fuel can be up to \$400 a gallon depending on how it is delivered. Our military itself is clearly held hostage by the philosophy that energy efficiency does not matter. As the lines of supply are dangerously stretched with more points of vulnerability, while the flexibility and nimbleness of our troops are compromised by having to have huge amounts of gasoline close at hand. Lighter, more energy efficient vehicles are harder targets for the enemy to strike, and they can move greater distances between refueling and do not need this long chain of supply with more points of vulnerability for the vehicles and for our soldiers.

□ 1300

The situation the military faces in Iraq and other potential trouble spots demands action on an ambitious energy policy with a significant commitment to fuel conservation and renewable technologies, if only for the sake of the security of our Nation and the safety of our troops.

The skyrocketing gas prices this spring further demonstrates that we are hostage to an inadequate energy infrastructure with constrained refining capacity. The energy bill contains almost no incentives for change, as all those currently in control profit by this restricted supply, vulnerability, and volatility. As gasoline prices have increased 50 cents a gallon in a matter of weeks, every tank of gasoline is a reminder that the Republican leadership in Congress for 10 years has refused to significantly increase fuel efficiency standards, which would have meant significant money in the pocket of every American family.

The inability or unwillingness to establish a predictable window for wind energy development, by making the

production tax credit permanent means that tens of thousands of jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars in new investment are delayed, with the advances in technology and additional elements of supply are denied to the public. This is ironic, when our military is touting the contribution that wind energy is making to the security and efficiency of operations at Guantanamo.

The energy bill continues to spend too much for the wrong people to do the wrong things and shortchanging the technologies and strategies that ultimately will make a difference for the future. There is no question that America in this century will rely much more heavily on renewables and conservation. The sad note is that we are slipping behind the Chinese, who are increasing their cars' fuel efficiency standards, and further behind the European and Japanese, who are already racing ahead of us in energy efficiency.

Even in a defense-dominated, security-obsessed environment that this Congress operates in, we cannot make energy investments that will at least enhance our military to make the military and America's families more secure. We can and should do better.

#### FEDERAL LEGISLATION TO PROHIBIT PREDATORY LENDING

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FORTENBERRY). Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MILLER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. MILLER of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the financial condition of American working and middle-class families is a mess. Wages are stagnant, health care costs are exploding, the individual savings rate for 2004 was 1 percent, and credit card debt is more than \$800 billion.

The bright spot is that 69 percent of American families own their own home. The equity that American families build in their homes by years of faithfully paying a mortgage is the bulk of the net worth, the life savings, of most homeowners.

Homeownership is more than an investment. The deed to a home is a membership card to the middle class. Families living on the fringes of poverty can begin to get their footing when they own their own home and become part of a neighborhood where parents know their children's playmates. Financially vulnerable families are even more likely to have to borrow against the equity in their homes to provide for life's rainy days, however.

Every American homeowner faces a mountain of documents when they borrow money to buy a home or when they use their home to secure a loan. Many vulnerable homeowners borrow knowing only how much their monthly payment will be, only to learn later that they signed away a big part of their home equity, of their life savings.

There are lending practices that should offend anyone with a conscience. Let me give my colleagues one of the stories from North Carolina that prompted the North Carolina legislature, not generally seen as a hotbed of liberalism, to enact legislation to prohibit predatory lending 6 years ago.

A lender approached an elderly school employee in Durham about refinancing her home to consolidate her debts. The lender charged her \$17,542 in up-front costs on a \$99,000 loan, including a \$5,002 origination fee, a \$2,142 loan discount fee, and a \$9,089 single-payment, nonrefundable credit premium insurance. She would never have written a \$17,542 check at closing, but when she signed the closing documents, the charges came straight out of the equity she had built in her home, straight out of her life's savings.

The North Carolina law enacted in 1999 has put an end to practices like that, and without hindering honest lenders from making loans to vulnerable families that need to borrow against their home. Sub-prime credit remains readily available in North Carolina.

The gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WATT), the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK), and I have introduced Federal legislation based on North Carolina's proven law.

Critics of our legislation argue that we would restrict consumer choice. Most consumers would like the choice of knowing they are not being taken advantage of; that when they borrow money against their home for a rainy day, they are not entering into a spiral that results in losing their life's savings, their home, and their membership in the middle class. That choice is not now available to many American homeowners.

We look forward to working with others in Congress and in the financial services industry. We welcome proposals from others to prohibit abuses. But we also want to make sure that Congress does not pass legislation that permits new abuses. We must make sure that the protections of any new law are not easily avoided, and we cannot handcuff the States' ability to protect consumers. Sub-prime lending is now a \$530 billion industry, and growing. Vulnerable consumers cannot afford to have to come back to Congress again and again for real protections against abusive sub-prime lending practices.

David's victory over Goliath was considered an upset, and Goliath would have been heavily favored in a best-of-seven series. If Congress passes predatory lending legislation, we need to get it right the first time. Consumers cannot count on having a second chance.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 7 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. ISSA) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Reverend Timothy B. Johnson, pastor, the Church of the Redeemer, Bowie, Maryland, offered the following prayer:

O God, thank You for loving us. In gratitude and humility we come to You now needing only what You can give.

Forgive our pride. Forgive our sins and the things that we allow to cause division. Forgive and change us.

Bless these leaders and this great Nation and those they represent; people have given them the honor and responsibilities of leadership. May they lead with integrity and wisdom. Bless them and their families, knowing that they are often far from home and celebrations.

Thank You for this Nation and the freedoms we cherish. As we strive to bring freedom to others, protect our troops and civilians who are in danger. By Your guidance may the freedom we seek be true freedom, and may it be freedom that leads to peace.

We pray all of this in the name of Your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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 pro tempore. Will the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON 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.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Monahan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 289. An act to authorize an annual appropriation of \$10,000,000 for mental health courts through fiscal year 2011.

CARDINAL JOSEPH RATZINGER TO BE POPE BENEDICT XVI

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

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, today people across the world have watched the ceremony and historical proceedings in Vatican City with anticipation and joy. Today the Catholic Church receives its 265th Pope. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger rises to his new name, Pope Benedict XVI, and takes with him the blessings of Catholics across the world.

In a time of global unrest and terrorism, people of all faiths need to join together in prayerful contemplation of what we hope the world can become. Pope John Paul II brought the church to billions of people and Pope Benedict XVI inherits the throne of Saint Peter the Fisherman at a precarious time in world history. Our prayers are with him and for our collective salvation.

ENERGY BILL NEEDS TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

(Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the energy bill we are about to debate this week is presented as a major step forward in American energy policy. But it is not. It is quite the opposite.

This bill does nothing to improve the environment of this country or cut down on ozone pollution exposure. This bill does not force big polluters to clean up. Rather, it provides billions of dollars in tax breaks to politically favored energy industries that do not deserve them at a time when the country can ill afford it.

Mr. Speaker, the State of Texas ranks number one among other States in per capita consumption of electricity and second in ozone pollution exposure. Last year Children's Hospital of Dallas had 4,000 emergency department visits for treatment of asthma attacks. The average age of these kids was 5 years old.

More and more, there are hospitalizations. More and more, there are deaths from the pollution that we suffer in Texas; and I will offer an amendment to try and correct it. But, Mr. Speaker, I know that probably I am in the minority, but we must clean up the environment.

REGULATION NEEDED FOR 527 ORGANIZATIONS

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

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the Committee on House Administration will be holding a hearing on regulation of the so-called 527 political organizations.