

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the American people, how many of you have heard lately of a catastrophic oil spill? Even with our oil wells with Katrina and Rita, how many of you have heard of dangerous blowouts that kill people? How many of you have heard of these fires being ignited? How many of you heard of the contaminated drinking water from our oil platforms? None.

Mr. Speaker, this is the reason we can't get anything from the Democratic majority, because, Mr. Speaker, these environmental groups are controlling the agenda on this House floor when it comes to the U.S. production of oil. And Mr. Speaker, I am afraid that there is nothing the minority can do about it except stand here and beg the American people to become involved.

H.R. 6, which was the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, that was passed by the Democratic majority, this is the one, the commonsense energy plan to bring down skyrocketing gas prices. And as you saw on my other chart, they have almost doubled.

Here are the words in that 316 page bill. Crude oil was mentioned five times, gasoline 12, exploratory drilling, two, offshore drilling, none, Domestic drilling, none, domestic oil, none, domestic gas, none, domestic fuel, none, domestic petroleum, none, gas price or gas prices, none, common sense, none, light bulb, 350 times.

Mr. Speaker, we called it a no energy plan, and this is a quote from Mr. DEFAZIO about the comments the Republicans made about H.R. 6, the Common Sense Energy Bill. "It is sad to see the Republicans come to this. Now they will laughably say this will lead to higher gas prices."

That was January 18, 2007, when gas was about \$2.10 a gallon. It is now \$4.07.

Mr. Speaker, I beg, I implore the American people to become involved. Go to house.gov/westmoreland; find out where your congressman is at. See if they won't have the will to sign that petition to let you know, Mr. Speaker, the constituents of the people elected to this body, that they believe in lowering gas prices for all Americans.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF SENATE AMENDMENT TO H.R. 5501, TOM LANTOS AND HENRY J. HYDE UNITED STATES GLOBAL LEADERSHIP AGAINST HIV/AIDS, TUBERCULOSIS, AND MALARIA REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2008

Mr. WELCH of Vermont (during the Special Order of Mr. WESTMORELAND), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110-766) on the resolution (H. Res. 1362) providing for consideration of the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 5501) to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 2009 through 2013 to provide as-

sistance to foreign countries to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF SENATE AMENDMENT TO HOUSE AMENDMENTS TO SENATE AMENDMENT TO H.R. 3221, AMERICAN HOUSING RESCUE AND FORECLOSURE PREVENTION ACT OF 2008

Mr. WELCH of Vermont (during the Special Order of Mr. WESTMORELAND), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110-767) on the resolution (H. Res. 1363) providing for consideration of the Senate amendment to the House amendments to the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 3221) to provide needed housing reform and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

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THE MORAL COMPASS OF THE UNITED STATES IN ITS QUEST FOR VICTORY

THE SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ALTMIRE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the privilege to be recognized to address you here on the floor of the greatest deliberative body the world has ever known—the United States House of Representatives.

I am pleased to be a part of this institution that has elections every 2 years, which requires us to put our fingers on the pulse of the American people. Even though most of us don't like the idea of a 24-24-7 campaign, that being 24 months, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, you set up a perpetual motion machine, and you make sure that the people on your staff and those who are working with you are out there constantly with their fingers on the pulse, listening, talking.

Part of my job is to listen, and part of my job is to project the things that I learn and the things that I know. We have people in this Congress who decide, well, their job is simply to vote the majority opinion of their districts. They don't necessarily consider whether the district is right or wrong as far as the majority is concerned. They just try to put their fingers on the pulse and decide, well, let's see. If 51 percent of the people think this way and if 49 percent of them disagree and think the other way, then if I come down on the side of the 51, then I'll be able to keep coming back here to Congress and sort out the opinions and be, let me say, the barometer of the people in their districts.

Mr. Speaker, I think that's wrong; I think that's narrow, and I think that's

shortsighted, but I do believe we have a responsibility to listen to our constituents. We have a responsibility to listen to the people in our States whether they're in our districts or not. We have a responsibility to listen to the American people across the board.

In the end, each one of us—each of us 435 Members of the House of Representatives and every one of the 100 Senators on the other side of the rotunda—has a responsibility. We owe Americans and especially our constituents our best judgment. That means we listen to the people in the district and across the country. It also means that here we are where we are, in a way, the epicenter of information for the world, where information comes pouring in here, and if I need to find an answer to a question, I ask somebody and the answer comes, and it comes almost always in a form that I can use it and incorporate it into the argument that I'm making and further enlighten.

So we have access to more information here than most people have, at least across the country, and they're out there doing a good job. They're on the Internet, and they're reading, and they're watching the news, and they're thinking and having these conversations across the country. Their conversations help shape the middle of America. If some people weigh in on the right and some people weigh in on the left, it kind of comes out to a balance. It's going to balance. It's a moving fulcrum in the middle.

What we need to do is to take this access to information that we have—and we owe the people in this country our best judgment—and we need to weigh the information. We need to apply our best judgment to the real data that we have, and if we disagree with the majority of our constituents, that doesn't mean that we go vote the way they think we should. We may do so, but we have an obligation to let them know, perhaps, both sides of the argument and to step in and to make the case. Sometimes we're called upon to go back and to inform the people in our districts of the things that we know even though we know very well that they may disagree with our positions.

The first thing we have to do is to do what is right for our country. The second thing we have to do is to do what's right for our States. The third thing we need to do is to do what's right for our constituents. I have said a number of times that, if it's good for America and not good for Mom, I'm sorry, Mom; we're going to find another way to take care of you. My first obligation is not with individuals but with the broader, overall good for the destiny of this country. Often those things come together, and almost always they do.

I actually can't think of a time when I've had to put up a vote that was contrary to the wishes of my district or was contrary to the best interests of my district, but that's where I draw the line—an obligation. I owe the people in this country my best judgment