

oil in the gulf. We cannot drill for oil in the ANWR in Alaska. I've been up there and talked to the gentleman who represents Alaska in the Congress, DON YOUNG. He'll tell you there's nothing up there that's going to be damaged if we drill, and besides that, you can do it in an environmentally safe way. But we can't drill offshore because they've limited permits. The President is now saying he'll allow some permits, but they are very minimal.

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We can't drill on the Continental Shelf. We can't drill in the ANWR. We can't do anything to explore really for additional energy. We have probably a couple hundred years' supply of natural gas that we can drill for and use the fracking procedure, but a lot of the environmentalists are trying to stop that as well.

Our dependency on the Middle East is unbelievable. There's a potential for a major war over there because of Iran's nuclear development program, and we continue to depend on energy from that Persian Gulf area, from the Saudis. They're using a lot of our money to support Wahhabism and the madrassas over there that create radical Islam. So we need to move away from dependency on foreign oil.

In South America, President Chavez in Venezuela—who doesn't like us—is working with Tehran. He's selling his oil to China, and yet we buy an awful lot of our oil from him because we're dependent on him. We need to move toward energy independence.

The President will not allow the gulf pipeline, the pipeline from Canada down to Texas, because of environmental concerns. That's been looked at for 3 years. There's other ways around the potential problem, but he won't let it happen because of environmentalists, the radicals.

Now, we can depend in the future, to a degree, on wind, solar, geothermal, and nuclear, but that's going to take a long time. Even if we use all of those technologies today, it will only be a drop in the bucket as far as our energy needs are concerned. You know who's demanding more and more energy all the time? China and India buy thousands and thousands of barrels of oil a day, so that oil that's coming out of other parts of the world is going to be gobbled up more and more and more by China and India. We need to move to energy independence.

The President says, oh, you know, we can't solve the problem by drilling. The fact is we can. There's a lot of things we can do: the pipeline from Canada, drill offshore, drill in the gulf, drill in the Continental Shelf, use more natural gas, do away with all the regulations that are strangling the private sector as far as energy development. So what does he want to do? He says we've got to raise taxes on energy exploration, on the oil companies. That's going to be passed on to the consumer in higher prices.

This administration, nice guy, good smile, gives a great speech, but he's not solving our problems, and our dependency continues to increase on foreign energy. We need to move toward energy independence, and we need to do it now and not wait until after the election.

CORPORATE PERSONHOOD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, it's interesting listening to the fantasy Republican talking points. The fact is we are now drilling more oil in the United States than ever before. The inconvenient facts get in the way of political talking points. But what is not a fantasy is what is happening on the political screen.

In the final 3 months of 2011, the campaign to reelect President Obama and the Democratic National Committee raised \$68 million, an impressive sum, all the more impressive because it was donated by 583,000 Americans who gave an average of \$55 each. But earlier this month, at a retreat at the exclusive Renaissance Esmeralda Resort in southern California, the conservative billionaire Koch brothers said they would donate a combined \$60 million to super PACs to defeat President Obama. Two billionaire brothers with opinions radically at variance with most of America are poised to cancel out the efforts of half a million American citizens.

To understand this gross perversion of the political process, we don't have to wait for the general election and the avalanche of negative campaign ads against the President. We can look right now at the primary election for the Republican Presidential nomination, where we've seen a handful of billionaires and their super PACs outspend all the Republican candidates and help turn that contest into a circus.

The sad reality is that the super PACs have shaped the political campaign more than the candidates. That's the world we live in since the Supreme Court's tragic decision in Citizens United, which overturned a century of settled law and opened this floodgate of unlimited campaign spending, drowning out small donors and individuals that most of us learned in school were the cornerstone of our democracy. This Supreme Court ruling was based on the perverse idea that the Court's out-of-touch majority somehow felt corporations should enjoy the same constitutional rights as people. This threatens the integrity of the political process, not just from the appearance of corruption, but actually, blatantly, distorting the process.

As companies and sham independent organizations that are actually run by candidates' friends and employees blanket the airwaves with an ava-

lanche of vicious negative advertising, now somehow they are protected under a First Amendment right of free speech which would be beyond the comprehension of our Founding Fathers. Mitt Romney may believe that corporations are people, but do the rest of us need a comedian like Steven Colbert to remind us that only people are people?

There's an outside chance of relief from a century-old Montana law banning corporate corruption in their political landscape, which was passed after the most egregious and well-documented abuse in Montana. A case about this law would provide the Supreme Court a lifeline to climb down from the precarious and dangerous constitutional ledge, a ledge that they have not only crawled out onto, but they dragged the American people and the political process with them with their Citizens United decision.

There's a chance that the Supreme Court will use this Montana law to reestablish the basic parameters protecting the political process from the corruption of vast sums of unregulated corporate money. But in the meantime, it's important that we advance a constitutional amendment that would eliminate the notion of corporate personhood, explicitly stating that the rights of natural persons may only be afforded to real people, not corporations.

As we work to overturn Citizens United and ban corporate personhood, people should not have to wait to judge whether a candidate is representing the public or representing their benefactors. We should pass the DISCLOSE Act, H.R. 4010, to require political spending by corporations and individuals to be fully transparent. We should be unstinting in other efforts in the regulatory and legal process to make sure that shareholders of corporations have an opportunity to at least know, and maybe even have a say, about what the corporations that they are supposed to own are doing on their behalf. We should support H.R. 1404, the Fair Elections Now Act, to promote public campaign financing to ensure the public's voice is not drowned out by moneyed special interests.

The Supreme Court's decision on Citizens United was based on fantasy, the fantasy that vast sums of money from hidden special interest are not inherently corrupted; the fantasy that corporations should be afforded all the rights of citizens; the fantasy that super PACs run by individuals who are the closest allies, friends, and employees of candidates are somehow independent.

What is not a fantasy is what we see right now on the political landscape, the terrifying effect of super PACs and the flood of money hopelessly distorting the campaigns. We should all fight to change it.

AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from