

over 30,000 caribou there. I saw them peacefully coexisting.

So, when you take away their real arguments and you see it firsthand that you can drill for oil and that you can do it in an environmentally friendly manner, what is the bottom line for why some of these environmental extremists don't want us to drill? Well, we don't have to guess. This is what the president of the Sierra Club says. His name is Carl Pope, executive director of the Sierra Club: "We are better off without cheap gas." They don't want gas prices to go down.

Tell the single mom in Orlando who just paid 80 bucks to fill up her minivan that she is better off without cheap gas. Tell the thousands of airline employees who just lost their jobs because of skyrocketing fuel that they're better off without cheap gas. Tell the people in Orlando, Florida who are losing their jobs in the tourism industry because tourism is down that they're better off without cheap gas. Tell the small businessman who has just had to lay off his employees because he can't make the payroll anymore because of gasoline prices that he's better off without cheap gas. Tell the school districts that are having to go to 4-day-a-week school because they can't afford the gas for their buses that they're better off without cheap gas.

Let's bring some sanity back into this program. Let's have a vote, up or down, on the American Energy Act. Let's have it right now, this month, before we adjourn.

#### FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS

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

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask the question: Why is the House of Representatives withdrawing from trade? Why is the House of Representatives drawing away from our need to export products to good markets?

The economic statistics speak volumes. This past week, we saw 3.3 percent economic growth for the last quarter. We'd all like to see it better, but what was interesting was that, of that 3.3 percent economic growth, almost all of it, in fact 3.1 percent economic growth, resulted from trade and from exports. So the good news in the economy today is that we're expanding our exports, and if we did not have the opportunity to export products, our economy would really be in bad shape because it's the export market that's keeping this economy moving forward with manufactured goods, agricultural goods, services, and other products.

Today, we are fortunate to have 16 bilateral agreements with other nations, many in our own hemisphere in the Americas, and we're fortunate to enjoy a trade surplus with all of them. We voted on these trade agreements in the House. Those who opposed them said, you know, if we have trade agree-

ments, we always lose. Well, the interesting thing is, with the Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement and with the Chilean Free Trade Agreement, we've seen the results. American farmers, American manufacturers and American workers are winning because we have a trade surplus with those countries today. In fact, we had a trade deficit with Central America before DR-CAFTA, and today, we have a trade surplus. So trade agreements win.

That's why I was so concerned when a spokesman for the Speaker of the House explained her refusal to schedule a vote on the Colombian trade agreement: You know, the economy is bad and trade agreements are bad for America. We can't have a vote on a trade agreement, because somehow that hurts us.

All you have to do is look at the facts, and you'll see that trade and exports are good for America. My State and the district that I represent in Illinois are trade dependent. We depend on exports to create jobs as does the rest of America whether it's union workers who make Caterpillar bulldozers in Joliet or in Decatur or in Peoria or whether it's farmers in Bureau County who are growing corn or soybeans. We depend on our exports, on the export market, to create jobs and to raise our incomes. Frankly, it's the export market today that's the engine of economic growth. We have before this House a good trade agreement. It's the U.S.-Colombia trade agreement. "Trade promotion agreement" is the technical term.

Colombia is not only the oldest democracy in Latin America; it is also the second largest Spanish-speaking country, a market of 42 million consumers. It's a country that has made tremendous progress. In fact, our ally Colombia, which is a democracy, has a very popular president. President Uribe is the most popular elected president in all of the Americas. He has an over 80 percent approval rating. Compare that with the United States House of Representatives, which, I think, has a 16 percent approval rating from our own citizens. Clearly, he has made progress. He inherited a civil war. He has made progress in reducing violence. He is bringing those who committed atrocities during the civil war, on both the left and the right, to trial to be held accountable. He is going after the narco-traffickers who have jeopardized the security of that country.

It's interesting to know that 71 percent of Colombians today say they feel more secure under President Uribe while 73 percent say Uribe respects human rights. Homicides are down 40 percent. Kidnappings are down 76 percent. In fact, the murder rate in Colombia is the lowest in 15 years, and it's actually lower than that of Washington, D.C.'s. So, if you're a citizen of Colombia, you're safer than a tourist or a citizen who is walking the streets of Washington, D.C. when it comes to being a victim of violence.

The bottom line is the U.S.-Colombia trade agreement is good for America. There are those who always oppose trade, and they always have an excuse. They say, you know, in the history of Colombia, there has been some violence, and everyone acknowledges that. President Uribe and his government have made tremendous progress. Then they say, well, there has been violence against labor leaders. Yes, there has been. President Uribe and everyone involved acknowledge that, but they've made tremendous progress. The bottom line is, under President Uribe, Colombia is a safer and better place.

Colombia deserves a vote. We need to bring the U.S.-Colombia trade agreement to this floor and to vote on it up or down. I believe it will pass with a bipartisan majority, and American workers will be the winners.

#### RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 13 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CAPUANO) at noon.

#### PRAYER

The Most Reverend James A. Tamayo, Bishop of the Diocese of Laredo, Texas, offered the following prayer:

Heavenly Father, in Your wisdom, You created man and woman and called us to be stewards of Your creation. As this new day begins for the Congress of the United States, we invoke Your presence in our deliberations and activities.

We represent communities from diverse parts of this great Nation. Although we travel to our Nation's Capitol from different directions, as U.S. legislators, let us be steadfast in our solidarity to seek the common path that leads to the betterment of all people in our Nation.

Noble and valiant men and women of different cultures and ethnic heritages contributed to the establishment of democracy in the United States of America. Strengthen our resolve to do good. We accept the challenge to listen to one another, to support one another, and to respond generously to those most in need.

This we pray in Your Holy Name.

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 gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. KIRK 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 Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 6456. An act to provide for extensions of certain authorities of the Department of State, and for other purposes.

#### WELCOMING THE MOST REVEREND JAMES A. TAMAYO

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

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Most Reverend James A. Tamayo, the Bishop of the Diocese of Laredo.

Bishop Tamayo has admirably served those of Catholic faith in the community of Laredo, Texas, for the past 10 years at San Agustin Cathedral, the oldest Catholic Church in south Texas. His passion for helping the religious community and his dedication to his calling has made Bishop Tamayo an essential part of the community in Laredo.

Bishop Tamayo came to heed the call of religious service by attending St. Mary's Seminary in Houston, Texas. From there, he graduated magna cum laude from the University of St. Thomas in Houston. After that, Bishop Tamayo became the Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Galveston-Houston in 1993, and then went on to become Bishop of the Diocese of Laredo in 2000.

Bishop Tamayo currently serves on the Texas Board of Directors in the Texas Catholic Conference as well as the Texas Conference of Churches. He is a member of the Boy Scouts National Hispanic Initiative Committee, building upon the great relationship he has established with the youth in the interfaith community.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to honor Bishop James A. Tamayo for his service to the Diocese of Laredo. Words cannot express how much he has done for the people of the city of Laredo and the surrounding communities. His quest to serve others and his desire to better the lives of those in Laredo is truly commendable.

I thank you for your time.

#### IT'S TIME FOR BALANCED AND FAIR TRADE

(Mr. KAGEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KAGEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring to the country's attention something devastating that is happening in northeast Wisconsin. Our paper industry, the very industry that grew the jobs and grew the future of northeast Wisconsin, is being devastated because of unbalanced and unfair trade with Communist China, who continues to export illegal paper.

Just recently, a corporation called New Page closed the Kimberly Mill. You've heard of Kimberly-Clark and Kleenex. Well, Kimberly has had a mill since the 1890s.

I am going to present every morning and every evening the stories of real people and their real damages. And one of the families is Don Wendel and his wife, Ann, with their two children, Kathleen and Anthony. He worked there for 30 years. "Our daughter is a junior in high school, and the thought of paying for college with this uncertain future is daunting. We may have to sell our car we bought in March. It is shocking and disheartening that the owners, instead of researching options to make this mill profitable, made a quick decision to shut it down. It's causing such great devastation for everyone in Kimberly and throughout the Fox Valley in northeast Wisconsin."

Mr. Speaker, it's time we had balanced trade deals, not free trade.

#### SUPPORT NATO

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

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, our country rises to its potential when we support NATO, especially when an ally asks for help.

In August, the missile threat to our allies grew. Russia invaded Georgia and fired over a dozen ballistic missiles at her people. And Iran also tested its first space-launched rocket. In response, our Polish allies signed an agreement calling for a U.S. missile defense base. It will not only defend Europe, but also us.

Poland is a good ally, having sent 18,000 troops to Iraq, covering five provinces, and now surging support for U.S. troops in Afghanistan. But in July, the House gutted funding for the base in Poland. Without a Polish agreement, the House cut \$400 million. But now that agreement has been signed. Poland's foreign minister has asked for U.S. support, especially after Russia's President Putin threatened both Poland and Ukraine.

Tomorrow I will offer a defense appropriations amendment to refund the cuts made against Poland. If the les-

sons of the last century are clear, we know that America has fewer problems later if we support a friend like Poland now.

#### A COMPREHENSIVE ENERGY PROGRAM

(Mr. WILSON of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WILSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, for far too long our country has suffered from the effects of this administration's lack of an energy plan.

This New Direction Congress has worked hard to set new standards for energy efficiency and independence. We enacted into law the first new vehicle efficiency standards in 32 years. These standards will actually save the average family \$1,000 a year.

We created a diverse portfolio of alternative fuel standards that, when combined with traditional energy sources, puts us on the right track to becoming less dependent on foreign oil. And we helped lower prices at the pump by pressuring the administration to suspend the deposit into the government reserve.

With these efforts we have made important steps. Much more needs to be done. We must come up with a more responsible energy policy that will provide relief for working families.

I believe that the solution to this problem requires Congress to focus on the Nation's efforts of encouraging innovation, while still using the abundant resources we have, like coal. I look forward to working on a comprehensive energy program this week and to make real progress for our Nation.

#### WE NEED AN ENERGY VOTE ON THE HOUSE FLOOR

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, we have all seen the dismal approval ratings the American people have given Congress. And who can blame them? My goodness, they have really grown so ill and fatigued of all the excuses they hear from our leaders. And that is why over the past 5 weeks, 137 Republicans have spoken here on the House floor in favor of American energy and in favor of solving this problem for the American people.

Although Congress was in recess and the lights were turned out and the microphones were off and the TV cameras were quiet, we brought our constituents onto this floor to demonstrate that we are willing and ready to go to work. And still, there is no vote, no vote scheduled on legislation to increase American energy development and to decrease our reliance on foreign oil.

Should Congress promote increased production of American energy? Should