

Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 1230.

This is the first in the Republican ``amnesia acts" that ignore what happened last year in the Gulf of Mexico. It would force the Department of Interior to rush into holding new lease sales in the Gulf of Mexico and off the coast of Virginia, not far from New Jersey, I might add, even though Congress has not enacted a single piece of legislation to improve the safety of offshore drilling.

The President's spill commission reported that offshore drilling in U.S. waters is four times more deadly than drilling elsewhere in the world, even for the same companies. Clearly there is a safety problem that must be addressed.

And I must emphasize, because they have talked about it again and again, they are talking about high oil prices, high prices at the pump. We feel it. Everybody in America feels it. Do they address it? No, they do not address gasoline prices. It actually accelerates handouts to Big Oil, this legislation does.

In addition to being silent on safety concerns, this prohibits any further environmental review in the gulf based on the lessons learned from the Deepwater Horizon last year. That tragedy exposed the woefully inadequate ways in which the environmental reviews had been done in the Gulf of Mexico.

Need I remind the Speaker or the majority that there are no walruses to protect in the Gulf of Mexico? As you heard from Mr. *Markey*, that is the level of quality in the environmental review that they want to apply from here on out. The analysis assumed that blowout preventers were capable of preventing blowouts. We know now, we have learned, they are not. The post-spill investigations have clearly demonstrated that the assumptions of the environmental review are not sufficient. I will offer an amendment shortly to drop the language that would deem this environmental review to be adequate.

Despite the poor safety and environmental record accumulated in the gulf, H.R. 1230 recklessly puts the Atlantic coast at risk.

H.R. 1230 recklessly puts the Atlantic coast at risk of experiencing an oil spill such as what we have seen before. That is why I call this an ``amnesia act." There are two more bills we will be seeing here on the floor that are similar.

This is not in the interest of the U.S. consumer, it is not in the interest of fishermen, it is not in the interest of coastal residents. This is not in the interest of America.

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This is about Big Oil handouts, pure and simple. There are no lessons learned, no lessons applied with regard to safety or protection of the environment. You know, if these companies were energy companies, as they like to say, they would invest more in producing sustainable, clean energy alternatives.

In the long run, we all know it. We've got to face the facts. We've got to break our addiction to oil; and if the majority, the authors of this legislation, really wanted to help the motorists, the consumers, they would address speculation. They would end the speculation. They would end the tax giveaways. They would use the strategic oil reserve to short-circuit speculation. The oil companies are not energy companies. They are fleecing machines.

The greatest profits of any corporation in history--and you heard me say a few minutes ago--that the biggest of them, Exxon, had an effective tax rate of about 0.4 percent. This will not help the consumer.