

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. Blumenauer) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, we have reached the home stretch in the Year 2000 elections, and I think it is safe to say that one of the areas that is most critical to our voters deals with the environment. I hope that in the remaining two weeks that we are dealing with this election that it will be an opportunity for people to focus on what the candidates stand for, what they would do if they were elected to our highest honor.

I think it is important to focus in on the environment, because it is one of the areas where people do not really have to guess about the differences between the two candidates. Somehow, in a number of areas dealing with this election, we appear to have sort of given a free ride on occasion dealing with the substance of these campaigns.

I found of great interest this morning the column that appeared in this morning's Washington Post by Michael Kinsley entitled 'The Stupidity Issue.' Kinsley is the slate editor who writes a weekly column for the Post, and he has done one of the best jobs I have seen in capturing the problems of Governor Bush and the representations that he has made in the course of his campaign.

Being delicate, either the Governor is having problems telling the truth, or his capacity to understand some of these issues is truly at question. It is illustrated, and Mr. Kinsley goes on at some length to talk about the way that Governor Bush has talked about his partial privatization of the Social Security program is going to be paid out of surpluses in that program.

Now, since both candidates have pledged to protect the surplus, including Governor Bush, it is quite clear that the Governor is going to have to either renege on his promise that there will be no reduction in benefits for the people for whom these surpluses have been dedicated to be able to provide it, or they are not going to be able to provide the transition to cover the costs of privatization. There is no two ways about it.

Mr. Kinsley goes on at some length in the article. He had three others that I thought were really rather noteworthy, and I quote.

'When he,' Governor Bush, 'repeatedly attacks his opponent for partisanship, does he get the joke? When Governor Bush blames the absence of a Federal Patients' Bill of Rights law on a lot of bickering in Washington, D.C., has he noticed that the bickering consists of his own party, which controls Congress, blocking the legislation? When he summarizes 'it is kind of like a political issue as opposed to a people issue,' does he mean to suggest anything in particular? Perhaps that politicians, when acting politically, ignore the wishes of the people? How does he figure, if at all?'

Mr. Kinsley goes on further about Governor Bush declaring in the debate, 'I don't want to use food as a diplomatic weapon from this point forward. We shouldn't be using food. It hurts the farmers. It is not the right thing to do. When just a few days later he,' Governor Bush, 'criticized legislation weakening the trade embargo on Cuba, which covers food, along with everything else, has he rethought his philosophy on the issue, or was there nothing to rethink?'

'Finally, when he,' Governor Bush, 'says that local control of schools is vital and criticizes his opponent for wanting to federalize education, and promises as president to impose various requirements on schools, when he complains that Federal money comes with too many strings, and then turns around and calls for after school funds to be used for character education, and then endorses a Federal law forbidding state lawsuits against teachers and so on, does he have a path through this maze of contradictions? When he,' Governor Bush, 'promises a Federal school voucher program, and then deflects criticism by saying vouchers are up to states, is he being dense, or diabolically clever?'

Unfortunately, we have seen this sort of approach by Governor Bush when we are dealing with issues in the Pacific Northwest, dealing with things like the salmon. We have a problem that currently we have a number of salmon species that are threatened with extinction, and we have a requirement to do something about it.

Governor Bush has traveled to the Pacific Northwest to declare that he has ruled out one of the potential solutions, and that would be the partial elimination of some of the dams in the Columbia River-Snake system. He will not tear down those dams, ever.

Well, it begs the question. What if that is the only choice to comply with the law of the land? Would he as president of the United States turn his back on the responsibility of complying with the Endangered Species Act? What if the Federal courts rule that we have treaty obligations to the Northwest Native Americans, a very strong case some feel that we may have, an obligation, both moral and legal, to those native peoples who have, frankly, been treated rather shabbily by the U.S. Government over the course of the last two centuries.

What if the Native Americans get tired of the behavior of the Federal Government and a lack of action and see that their treaty rights will be violated and they take us to court? And what if the Federal courts rule that we have an obligation to the Native Americans that entails partial dam removal? Is the Governor simply going to rule out compliance with the obligation to the Native Americans?

What if the alternatives that we have in complying with either our treaty obligations to Native Americans or to the Endangered Species Act under law, what if the alternatives place a far greater burden on the citizens of not just the Pacific Northwest, but on the United States Treasury? It would seem foolhardy to rule out consideration of an option that may in fact be legally required.

It also begs the question of when the Governor is in the process of ruling out potential action that may be mandated, what is his plan? I have listened as he has come to the Pacific Northwest, had a photo op out in the wilderness reading off a teleprompter. What is his plan? The silence is deafening. Who is going to be responsible, and how much will it cost?

Given the Bush record, I find no small irony that also in this election we are finding that Ralph Nader and some apologists for the Green Party are urging people to send a message by voting for Mr. Nader for president. It gives me pause, as somebody who cares deeply about the environment, as to what precisely might that message be? To turn your back on the most environmentally active and effective vice president since Teddy Roosevelt raises significant questions. To mislead the American public about both the Gore environmental record and the consequences seems to me to be sad.

Now, I have respected much of what Ralph Nader has stood for in past years. I had an opportunity to first meet him after I had recently graduated from college. Actually my first job

out of college was working as an assistant to the President of Portland State University, and I had a chance to work with Mr. Nader and some of his associates and Portland State University students in setting up the Oregon Student Public Interest Research Group.

They did a lot of good work, and I continue to work with them. But somehow for Mr. Nader and his apologists, to declare that there is no difference between Vice President Gore and George Bush is I think a similar stretch of credibility, similar to Governor Bush and his problems with his Social Security plan. There is, in fact, a huge difference between George Bush and Al Gore; and Ralph Nader knows it or he is completely out of touch with the last 5 years' battle in Washington D.C.

There is no difference between drilling in the Arctic Natural Wilderness reserve as is proposed by Governor Bush as a stopgap approach to some of our energy problems? Stopgap approach, by the way, which would take 10 years to come on line and provide only a few months' worth of energy supply for this country or Vice President Gore's staunch protection commitment to protect the ANWR and keep it off limits for drilling.

There is no difference between improving and enforcing the clean air standards and Governor Bush's advocacy and performance in Texas? Does not Mr. Nader know who is fighting the antienvironmental riders that have plagued this Congress since the Republicans assumed control?

I recall very little help, if any, from Mr. Nader here in the trenches for the 5 years that I have been in Congress as we have been resisting these destructive proposals to legislate via the appropriations process. But there is no difference between appointment of justices in the mode of Justice Thomas and Scalia to the Supreme Court that are the model that is cited by Governor Bush? Gentlemen who have a very distinguished, and I would argue limited, indeed, negative view of the opportunity for the Federal Government to protect environmental values. And contrast that with the appointees of the Clinton-Gore administration to the Judiciary, those few appointees further down in the judicial ranks sadly, because I am afraid our Republican friends in control of the United States Senate have been, I think, sadly deficient in allowing a bipartisan review in consideration of qualified, well-qualified, appointees to fill important vacancies in the lower Federal courts.

There is a clear, clear record, however, between the appointees of the Clinton-Gore administration and those cited as the model by Governor Bush. A court full of people in the

mode of Justice Thomas and Scalia would make a huge difference in the enforcement of our environmental laws for a generation.

The dead hand of Richard Nixon lives on a generation later in the person of Justice Rehnquist who was his appointee as chief justice. So the next President of the United States will have an impact on a whole generation of legal decisions with the appointments up and down the Federal bench.

It is important to note that as far as the Supreme Court is concerned, we have gone longer than at any period in our history, 177 years without a Supreme Court appointment, and we may be looking at 2, 3, 4 appointees just in the next term of the President of the United States.

Madam Speaker, it is, in fact, a major difference, and that in and of itself would justify support for Vice President Gore over a wasted vote for Ralph Nader or sitting home alone and not voting at all.

Having watched this administration struggle to push back the forces that are in control in this Congress, it seems to me that it would be an opportunity to set us back for years to come if we are not doing justice to the people, because either Mr. Bush or Mr. Gore is going to be elected President of the United States, even Mr. Nader agrees with that.

I think it is important that people consider how their vote for President is going to affect that outcome. And in that connection, I think it would be important to take a few minutes to look at that record between the Vice President and Governor Bush in a little greater detail.

I have referenced in the past some issues that relate to air quality. Governor Bush was asked in May of 1999 the impact on clean air since he became governor. Governor Bush said, when asked the question is the air cleaner since I became governor? The answer, according to Governor Bush, is yes.

Well, I invite people to take a close look at the record of the Bush administration in dealing

with the clean air problems of the State of Texas under the Bush administration. Smog problems in Texas cities have increased under the Bush administration.

Texas ranks first in the Nation in toxic air emissions from industrial facilities, discharging over 100 million pounds of cancer-causing pollutants and other contaminants in the air annually. Of the 50 largest industrial companies in Texas, 28 violate the Clean Air Act.

Currently, the areas of Houston-Galveston, Dallas-Fort Worth, El Paso and Beaumont-Port Arthur are in violation of Federal clean air standards for ozone pollution.

Madam Speaker, during the years that Governor Bush has been in office, Houston has surpassed Los Angeles as the city with the highest levels of smog in the United States, capturing that position sadly for the second year in a row.

Governor-elect Bush in 1994 opposed a new vehicle emissions testing program that had been designed and contracted by the State to implement the 1990 Clean Air Act calling it onerous and inconvenient. After he became governor in 1995, he and the legislature cooperated in overturning the centralized inspections on the ground that it would be too inconvenient for motorists. And instead they installed a decentralized system similar to the old system, except it costs more, tests less accurately, and is easier to evade.

He urged the EPA to, rather than help Texas solve the problem by being tough on polluters, he suggested that EPA measure pollution differently. He would not throw Dallas out of compliance because one monitor goes over unacceptable levels for an hour next summer. He wants the EPA to measure air quality over the longer period, over an average. Well, now Texas faces EPA penalties, the potential of losing Federal highway funds for failing to implement an air pollution plan for Dallas-Fort Worth in the face of a severe violation of clean air standards.

It is important to note that this is not some esoteric matter to quibble over. These air quality standards have an effect on people's lives. Just this last week, there was a report from the University of Southern California that had reviewed the impact of the smog in the Los Angeles Basin. Remember, Los Angeles has smog that is now not as serious as Houston's. In Los Angeles, they found that that impact on the children, and they monitored them from the 4th

grade to the 7th grade to the 10th grade, they found a 10 percent loss in the growth of lung capacity, this is not something that appears to be reversible.

With a 10 percent reduction, it made people much more likely to be hospitalized, for instance, with an asthma attack. These are serious issues that affect the lives of people at risk, particularly children, senior citizens, people with delicate health, but the Texas environmental legacy under Governor Bush continues sadly to be one that I do not think Americans would be proud of, and it is not something that they would like as a standard by our chief executive.

Texas ranks number one in the number of chemicals polluting its air. It ranks number one for the amount of toxics released in the atmosphere. In 1997, which was the most recent year that I could obtain statistics, over 260 million pounds of toxic pollution was released.

Since Governor Bush took office, the number of days when Texas cities have exceeded Federal ozone standards has doubled. Governor Bush often cites his leadership as Governor of Texas as a qualification to be President of the United States. Well, there is a lot of give and take about how much power it has and how he has used the power and whether he simply is claiming credit for things that his predecessor's put in place.

For instance, the education reforms have not been initiated by Governor Bush but were those that were initiated by his predecessors and the Texas legislature. But if Texas were a country, one area that it is big in, it would be the seventh biggest emitter of carbon dioxide of any Nation in the world.

We can take a step back, not just looking at clean air; although, that is one of the most graphic areas of failure of leadership, but look at what Texas has done in other areas of the environment. Look at aggregate spending on protecting the environment. Some people say, well, these comparisons really are not fair to Texas, because Texas has more industries, for example, that deal with petroleum, for instance.

What would be a fairer measure? Let us look at per capita spending on environmental cleanup, for instance. In fact, if Texas has all of these huge industries, all of these huge problems, these massive threats to the environment, we would expect that a fair way of measuring commitment to the overall environment would be looking at per capita spending. It

is a big State. Let us not compare it necessarily just to the State of California.

How much are they spending to solve the problem? Not that that is the entire test at all. They are spending, according to The Los Angeles Times of April 4 of this year, 44th in per capita spending on all environmental programs in the country. That is 44th from the top to the bottom.

There are only 5 States that spend less on cleaning up their environment, and given the fact that there is probably no State with greater environmental challenges, that is rather depressing, to say the very least.

Madam Speaker, it is of some interest that Governor Bush talks about his voluntary emissions cleanup to allow people to voluntarily decide in the area of the grandfathered plants that have been emitting harmful pollution. They were grandfathered in. The Senate bill 766 that Governor Bush is so proud of and touts as part of his approach has reduced harmful air pollution from these grandfathered plants in Texas, 470 of them, there are only a handful, less than three dozen actually complying. It has ended up in reducing harmful air pollution by less than 1/3 of 1 percent.

Well, what about water quality? In 1999, Texas was the third worst in the country for toxic water pollution. Now, this is 5 years after he assumed office, the third worst in dumping chemicals into its own water supply. Texas also ranked second worst for emitting known and suspected carcinogens into water in the country. It had the river with the third most pollution in the country and ranked third in emitting reproductive toxins into the waterway, and ranked second worst in dumping nitric compounds into the waterways.

I note that adding former Secretary Cheney to the ticket did not really do much in terms of balancing, because Secretary Cheney has a record as a Member of this Chamber where he could show what his passion and belief was in terms of protecting the environment. The League of Conservation Voters has assessed the records, the voting records of Members of this body for the last 25 or 30 years. During the time that Secretary Cheney served in this Chamber, he had amassed a lifetime voting record of 13 percent, according to the League of Conservation Voters. Cheney voted seven times against authorizing clean water programs, often as one of only a small minority of Members who voted against the authorization.

For example, in 1986, Cheney was one of only 21 Members to vote against the appropriations to carry out the Safe Drinking Water Act. One year later, in 1987, Secretary Cheney was one of only 26 Members to vote against overriding the Reagan veto of the reauthorization of the Clean Water Act.

Think about it. Mr. Speaker, 435 Members of this Chamber, almost 400, including in the neighborhood of 150 Republicans, voted against their own President on the veto of the reauthorization of the Clean Water Act, but not Dick Cheney.

In contrast, Al Gore has fought for clean water as a United States Senator and as Vice President. As Senator, he was an original cosponsor of the Water Quality Act of 1987, the same time that Secretary Cheney was one of only 26 Members of this body to vote against the outrageous veto, the override of the veto of the reauthorization of the Clean Water Act.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that I have been joined by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. Kind), with whom I have been privileged to work extensively in this Congress on issues that deal with water quality and the environment. I commend the gentleman for his vision and foresight in being the author of legislation that I was privileged to cosponsor to deal, for instance, with areas to make the Corps of Engineers more transparent in its operations, to allow more environmental and citizen input into its decisions, to allow independent review, independent scientific review to make sure those projects are meeting the mark, and he did not need a week-long series of articles in the Washington Post to alert him to the problem or to motivate him to action.

Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. Kind).

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Oregon for yielding me this time this evening.

I saw that he was talking about some very important issues dealing with the environment and conservation measures, and I do appreciate his support on the Corps reform bill that we introduced earlier this year, and we are happy to report that at least on a limited basis, a lot of the provisions that were contained in the reform bill that we offered are now adopted as pilot projects in the recent passage of the Water Resources Development Act. I think it is a very

positive step forward in letting the sunshine in on the Corps planning process by having outside expert review panels taking a look at projects up front to determine whether or not there would be a sufficient mitigation for any type of environmental damage that is done involving Corps projects, and whether it is cost-effective. This is not an anti-Corps bill that we introduced; rather one that would hopefully lift the cloud over what has become an embattled agency.

Mr. Speaker, there is another issue that I wanted to touch upon briefly this evening, one that I think there is a clear difference on as far as the agenda between Al Gore and George Bush. I represent western Wisconsin. It is a district that is still one of the largest dairy-producing districts in the entire Nation. However, our family farmers are under a crisis right now. There is a crisis in rural America that is sweeping the country, affecting all family farmers, with low commodity prices, low milk prices, and some of us here in Congress have been thinking of ways of what we can do as policymakers to assist our family farmers to survive. I know it is true for the family farmers that I represent in western Wisconsin that they are some of the best land stewards in the entire Nation. They understand the importance of conservation measures, sustainable farming practices, the effect it has on watershed areas.

In fact, there are a lot of good land conservation programs coming out of the Department of Agriculture that many of our farmers participate in. They are very popular, and they are a win-win for everyone involved. Farmers get direct cash assistance for participating in the programs which allows them to implement voluntary and incentive-based conservation practices right on their own land. Just to name a few, there is a wetlands reserve program that a lot of outdoor recreationists especially appreciate because of the water fowl and the benefit it brings to the water fowl species. There is Equip and there is also something called CRP, the Conservation Reserve Program. These are very popular programs for the farmers back in Wisconsin, and I know it is true for farmers throughout the country.

Mr. Speaker, this is a way to provide some cash flow to what has become a very difficult economic time for our family farmers. They participate in land conservation programs on a voluntary basis, they get cash assistance, and the communities around them benefit with cleaner watershed areas and less runoff that is occurring with sedimentation and nutrients from the farmland.

I have had many conversations with Vice President Gore in this regard, because we have another farm bill that is going to be coming up for reauthorization in the next session of Congress, and Vice President Gore is a strong supporter of sound land conservation practices that can benefit farmers, but which will also benefit the communities in which they are

operating. This is a huge difference between what Al Gore is proposing in regards to agriculture and farm policy and what Governor Bush is talking about.

In fact, it was striking in the last debate when we listened to the question that was raised in St. Louis in regards to agriculture policy; and I, for one, was very happy that it was finally raised as a question during these presidential debates, the striking difference between the answers, between Al Gore and George Bush. Al Gore recognized that there is a crisis right now in rural America, that family farmers are going out in droves because of low commodity prices. We are losing about three or four a day every day in the State of Wisconsin alone, and I know this is true in other parts of the country. Al Gore pledged to open up the farm bill as soon as possible, before it is too late for many, many more family farmers, and get to work on various programs.

I have introduced the National Dairy Reform bill that is receiving some support from other representatives in other regions. This has been an area of agriculture policy that has typically pitted farmer against farmer in region against region with no consensus being developed. But I have introduced a bill that representatives in the Northeast and Southeast recognize could be very helpful in order to level the income stream for family farmers and enable them to survive during very tough market conditions. It is countercyclical in nature in that it would offer countercyclical payments to farmers when the market price drops below a certain level.

Mr. Speaker, I think this is important, because family farmers do bring diversification in the agriculture sector as well as more sustainable farming operations, which has a direct impact on the environment and conservation practices in which they are operating. George Bush, on the other hand, has already stated as part of his agricultural agenda that he would completely eliminate the Conservation Reserve Program, CRP, which is one of the most effective conservation measures that is working for our family farmers today. He would just as soon get rid of the entire program, which I find quite astounding. His only response during the debate when it came to the farmers' question, what will you do to help farmers survive in what are some of the toughest market conditions they have faced in the last 30 years, his only response was, well, I will work hard to open up market access overseas. Well, on a theoretical and conceptual plane, that is fine, and Al Gore too is a big believer in being able to export more of our agricultural products abroad.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, was the gentleman concerned that on one hand, Governor Bush allegedly talks about opening these up overseas, and yet, turns around and criticizes the recent initiatives that were taken by this body on a bipartisan basis to open up the opportunity of having food to be traded with Cuba? Does that seem a little bizarre

to the gentleman?

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, it was entirely inconsistent with what he was saying during the debate and with what he was actually advocating during the legislative process and what we were actually working on here. But what is even more astounding is that the crisis is real and it is today. When we are losing four or five family farms a day, we cannot sit around waiting for these utopian markets to open up overseas and to be exporting a lot of products. We do not export much dairy products to begin with. I mean there just is not a great export market today for them.

So I think the farmers are really looking for a new administration that is willing to roll up their sleeves and work on farm policy that can start having an impact as soon as possible. Otherwise, if we wait around for these theoretical markets to open up overseas, it may be way too late for our farmers.

Mr. Speaker, another important part that we will have a chance to look at and discuss and debate and hopefully adopt as a part of the farm bill are these land conservation bills, something that Al Gore has consistently supported in his career in both the House and Senate and now in his career as Vice President of the United States, something he has pledged to support again in the future. I am highly confident that if it is his administration that we are dealing with when we are creating the next farm bill, that land conservation programs that are voluntary and incentive-based, that do provide income assistance to farmers who want to be able to do this, but when they are looking at low commodity prices and it is their very survival that is on the line right now, they do not have the extra cash reserves to implement some of the conservation programs that they know would work and work well on their own land. So it could be a wonderful partnership that is formed with already existing programs, with more creative thinking in regards to conservation measures that will help our farmers; and ultimately, it is going to benefit the water quality and the watershed area all around these producers.

I think it is a very important distinction. I think it is a very important difference between what Al Gore has been talking about during the course of the campaign, the type of conservation agenda he would pursue as it relates to family farmers in the country and what Governor Bush either does not support or perhaps just does not realize the importance of these programs that he is advocating to eliminate right now.

So I just wanted to come down and share that point in particular, given what we are experiencing back home in Wisconsin, with the plight of our family farmers, and really the difference in vision that is being offered by Al Gore on the one hand, who recognizes the crisis, has pledged to open up the farm bill right away, rather than waiting for another 2 years or maybe 3 years to implement some new farm policy, but also his strong support for land conservation measures that are going to make sense for those individual farmers.

I also wanted to just quickly commend the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. Minge) and also Senator Harkin from Iowa for taking the initiative in introducing legislation last week called the Conservation Security Act. What this will do is again, in line with the voluntary incentive basis for land conservation programs and cash assistance to farmers who develop and implement a comprehensive conservation plan for their land.

What is interesting with this legislative proposal is that it will be unique to each of the individual producers. It will not be: this is the program; now, see if we can fit it into your land. It will be: what do we have to work with, and then with technical assistance that will be provided, those farmers will be able to develop a conservation plan for their particular tract of land that they are producing on. It is a novel approach in that it provides an incredible amount of flexibility for the farmers to really accentuate the positive on their own land, rather than taking some round circle and trying to fit it into a square challenge that might be affecting their particular land.

I am hoping that this legislative initiative that I am co-sponsoring with the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. Minge) on the House side, along with some bipartisan support from the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. Thune), the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. Pomeroy) and others that this, too, will receive very serious attention.

But when one looks at farm policy, there are not any easy answers. If there were, they would have been found a long time ago. I think this is one area where we can do a better job of being able to provide an answer to family farmers in the area of environment and conservation measures that many of the farmers are doing, and they do very well but needs some assistance, some financial resources in order to accomplish the commonly shared objective of being good land stewards on the land.

So with that point, I thank the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. Blumenauer) for the time this evening.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's input in framing these issues as it relates to the environment, the difference between Governor Bush and Vice President Gore, and what it would mean for the agricultural industry. I did appreciate the gentleman's reference to the bipartisanship in both the legislation that he is cosponsoring and he referenced the progress that we made in the recently approved VAWA. That is something that I think bears some consideration.

I must confess, when I came to this Chamber, the partisanship really was sort of off putting. I note the presence in the Chamber this evening of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. Porter). I, too, am saddened at the prospect of his leaving. I have appreciated his thoughtful approach in a bipartisan fashion with the important work of the Committee on Appropriations and in other areas as well. There is no one I respect more, and I appreciate in my short tenure here what he has added in an element of bipartisanship.

I guess that is what concerns me the most, Mr. Speaker, about what the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. Kind) is talking about, because when it comes to America's environment, we should be working on a bipartisan basis.

The gentleman from Wisconsin and I have been working with people like the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. Gillmor) and the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. Bereuter). We have had the leadership on our Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure where the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Shuster) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. Oberstar) time and time again have actually fashioned this fascinating environmental legislation, ISTEA, the VAWA bill, where we have been able to put some of these provisions in.

I guess this is one of the concerns that I have because I do not want to have mistaken what we are talking about this evening that somehow just attempting to be mindlessly partisan.

All the legislation that the gentleman from Wisconsin and I have been working on, there has been an effort to make it bipartisan in nature. Regardless of who controls this Chamber in the next Congress, it is going to be important to fashion bipartisan agreements to move legislation forward.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, I just want to also commend the gentleman from Oregon for the leadership that he has provided this Congress in regards to livable communities. In fact, he established the Livable Communities Caucus, a working group of Representatives who get together and discuss a lot of sustainable development ideas, things that all of our communities are wrestling with day in and day out back home in regards to how they want to see their neighborhoods, their cities, their communities look in the next 20, 30, 50 years from now.

There is a lot of planning, development planning taking place back home. But there is also a lot of things that are being done here in the United States Congress, policy being made that can work to the detriment of this planning process back at the local level.

The gentleman from Oregon is raising that issue where it has never been raised before in the United States Congress. I appreciate his insight, his expertise on that, the fact that he has been able to reach out, bring in other Representatives from across the aisle in a bipartisan fashion again to have these discussions and to get everyone here thinking about what the implications are and policy that we pass and adopt in this body and how that is going to affect either to the benefit or the detriment of local communities and their planning process, development process of back home.

So I commend the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. Blumenauer). I look forward to working with him some more in the future on what is perhaps one of the more important issues that is sweeping the country right now when it comes to sustainable development issues. I thank him.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I appreciate the gentleman's words. I guess that is one of the things that disappoints me about the nature of the current Presidential campaign.

Last year, I worked on a bipartisan basis putting together a group of people to try and help both parties deal with these issues at the Graduate School of Design at Harvard with the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. Bereuter), the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. Johnson), the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. Weygand) where we had a bipartisan group to try and frame these issues. Because it sadly does not need to be partisan.

The point I wanted to make was that we actually reached out at Harvard University developing a bipartisan opportunity for people in both parties to fashion approaches for the environment and livable communities with a notion that it would play a larger role in this election.

I note with interest, and again I am sad about it, I am not happy to deal with the record of Governor Bush as it relates to local government and dealing with problems of sprawl. I was disappointed, because I had worked for years with people in the capital city of Austin, Texas who have tried repeatedly to figure out initiatives that they could take to help them get control of some very serious situations that they have, trying to manage growth and pollution and sprawl in the capital city of Texas.

Sadly, Governor Bush has supported legislation that took away the ability of the City of Austin to creatively solve their own problems. Now, the Governor has no national policy. The State of Texas does not have anything to help them. He would even support legislation that takes away the creative approaches that were taken by the capital city of Austin. I think it is a sad legacy.

As I say, it is not something that needs to be partisan. I am the first to point out that it was a Republican Vice President who subsequently became president, Teddy Roosevelt, who set aside the land for the impressive national monuments, one of the first and great conservationists.

But it was this administration over the objections, sadly, of some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, and apparently over the objections of the Republican ticket of Bush and Cheney for extending monument protection. In fact, they have already announced that these are some of the first things they will review in the event that they are elected this November.

Vice President Gore has been involved in this administration being point person on some of the more creative partnerships to protect, for example, habitat. Seventy percent of the continental United States is in private hands. Successful efforts to maintain and restore the Nation's wildlife must include private land owners.

One of the most valuable tools has been the Habitat Conservation Plan, which is a long-term agreement between government and a land owner that helps ensure the survival of threatened

wildlife while allows productive use of the land. Prior to 1993, only 14 such plans existed. Throughout 12 years of Reagan-Bush, 14 plans existed. This administration has forged another 250 plans protecting more than 20,000 acres and 200 threatened or endangered species.

The Vice President has been part of the effort to protect and expand national parks and monuments and has already announced that he will fight to block efforts to roll back the environment progress that we have made.

The Vice President has been active seeking full funding of the Lands Legacy Initiative, one of the more creative parts through the Land and Water Conservation fund.

The Vice President has long been on record to reform the antiquated mining law and use that reform to help pay for conservation. The Mining Act of 1872 is on the books effective identical today as it was signed by President Ulysses S. Grant. This allows patents for hard rock minerals on public lands to be mined for \$2.50 an acre or \$5 an acre.

Since taking office in January of 1993, the 1872 Mining law has required the Department of Interior to sign 40 mining patents, some of which have been granted to foreign hard rock company, mining companies, deeding away publicly owned resources valued at more than \$15 billion to individuals and private mining companies. In return, the taxpayers received a little more than \$24,000. This is an outrage.

The last Republican administration vetoed efforts of Democratic Congresses to reform it. Vice President Gore would use the money from mining royalties to pay incentives to protect open space and help communities support local parks.

I have already referenced earlier in my remarks this evening the rather bizarre position of Governor Bush who rules out some of the initiatives in saving the salmon stocks in the Pacific Northwest who has no plan himself. The Vice President has committed to saving the salmon stocks and is willing to consider all the options that would be required under our treaty obligations and under U.S. law.

Well, as I look at the record of Governor Bush, it gives me pause. Looking at the area of public lands, one is hard-pressed to find what Governor Bush did in his stewardship in the last 6 years to deal with Texas parks or public land.

Again, this is not a partisan issue. I have been on the floor of this Chamber commending Governor Christine Todd Whitman, Governor Pataki for his and her initiatives, respectively, dealing with the preservation of open space in the States of New Jersey and New York.

They do not have to be partisan issues. In fact, when governors, Republican or Democrat, take the lead, the public supports them, and legislators fall in place. Well, what is Texas doing to take advantage of the massive public support for improving park and open space?

Texas, the second largest State in the union, running substantial budget surpluses, where does it rank, where in the ranking of the States on the money it spends on State parks? A 1998 State audit found that Texas had a funding backlog of \$186 million just for the maintenance of existing parks.

In 1999, the Texas Parks Commission tried to remove the cap on a sporting goods tax to increase its revenue. Governor Bush could not see his way clear to either provide money in his budget or to support the increase in the revenues. The measure died. Governor Bush did appoint a tax force to find a solution, perhaps a good start. But then when his parks commission made a recommendation, did the governor embrace it? Did he come forward challenging the legislature to meet the needs? Sadly not. He created this task force on conservation which he charged with finding ways to ensure that Texas leaves a legacy for our children and grandchildren, a legacy of unwavering commitment to preserve and conserve our treasured lands. And then he ignored the request for initial funding for the commission.

A year ago on the campaign trail, one of the most important pieces of conservation legislation, and again I point out it was bipartisan legislation, it cannot be more bipartisan than when you have the gentleman from California (Mr. George Miller) and the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. Young), the chair and ranking member respectively of the Committee on Resources, which passes this Chamber with over 300 votes, Governor Bush, when asked last year about his support for the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, did not even know how to answer the question. He would increase logging on public lands. He would reverse the roadless area protections that have been a part of this administration's roadless area initiative. I have already referenced that they have indicated they might well try and reopen

lands to development that have been protected by this administration. I think it is something that is exceedingly frustrating for people who care about the environment to take a step back and look at the nature of this sorry legacy where the governor has dealt with the environment in the State of Texas.

It did not have to be that way. It was not that way with Governor Engler in Michigan, Christie Todd Whitman, Governor Pataki; it is not the way with Democratic governors across the country, but Governor Bush seemingly does not set a priority on the environment other than photo ops when he comes to the Pacific Northwest. Where is the passion, the commitment, the outrage that under his watch Houston has become the smoggiest city in the United States?

In the area of energy, which is important in terms of both American policy and its environmental consequences, here again is another stark difference between Vice President Gore and Governor Bush. Vice President Gore has supported conservation, is against drilling in the ANWR, 95 percent of Alaska's north slope is already available for oil and gas exploration and leasing. The wildlife preserve is the only 5 percent that is not available. And the estimate of the impact of the ANWR in terms of our energy supply is that it would be at most a 6-month supply of oil. And it would take 10 years to bring that energy supply to market. This is opposed by three-quarters of the American public. It is in fact even opposed by a majority of people in the State of Alaska. But it is part of Governor Bush's proposal for dealing with the energy problem.

Mr. Speaker, I am really troubled with this disconnect between America's long-term environmental interests, with the wishes and needs and interests of the American public, and what has been offered by Governor Bush and the Republican ticket. It is my hope that in the remaining 2 weeks of this campaign, that the American public will focus on the difference between the two gentlemen who would offer themselves up for President, one of whom will be elected President and use that in guiding their votes accordingly.