

Thursday will mark 30 days since the explosion of the Deepwater Horizon oil drilling platform and the tragic deaths of 11 personnel aboard. It also signals a month since the man-made, slow motion disaster has been bubbling up crude oil into the Gulf, threatening our environment and the regional economy.

While the Gulf Coast community has been maintaining an all-hands-on-deck focus to combat this growing threat which is already impacting Alabama's shores, I have been disappointed to see a mounting effort in Congress to capitalize on this spill in order to advance political agendas.

To be clear, Congress can and should exercise oversight in the federal response to the spill as well as the oil industry's part in this catastrophic event. However, it is cynical for lawmakers to use this disaster as an excuse to further an anti-drilling agenda. Now, in the midst of our efforts to combat this growing threat, is not the time for hasty decisions that will have long-term impacts on our economy and energy policy.

Congress's role at this point should be to render federal assistance as needed to help contain this spill and continue pressure on both BP and the responsible federal agencies to gain control of this unprecedented threat to our shores. Time is of the essence and political theatrics don't promote sound policy decisions.

Currently, more than 200,000 gallons of oil are being spilled each day into Gulf waters southeast of the Louisiana coast. Booms have been placed along more than 100 miles of the Gulf Coast in an effort to prevent damage to the most environmentally sensitive areas, such as estuaries.

Booms are also in position along the Alabama coast where tar balls from the oil spill have begun to wash ashore. Some 13,000 personnel and more than 500 vessels are involved in the oil spill response efforts, with another 2,500 volunteers in training.

After the larger containment dome failed to work as intended, BP is preparing to lower a smaller cap over the major source of the Gulf oil leak. BP is also considering clogging the well with debris to impede the oil flow into the Gulf. Additionally, two relief wells are being drilled to permanently stem the leak.

Limiting the damage is going to require a non-stop Gulf Coast team effort in partnership with the federal government. I am continuing to work closely with local, state and federal agencies to help our Alabama coastal communities prepare as much as possible to lessen the impact of the spill.

Another Attempt to Give Boeing KC-X Contract:

It appears that Boeing is growing increasingly uneasy about its chances to win the U.S. Air Force aerial tanker contract. Last week, Boeing-friendly lawmakers from Washington State, Illinois, Kansas and South Carolina – where the aircraft manufacturer has operations – introduced identical bills in the U.S. House and Senate calling on the Pentagon to favor Boeing

in the \$40 billion contract.

The only way the American military will get the best possible air tanker is for the Defense Department to conduct a vigorous and fair competition that weighs aircraft cost and capability. Boeing continues to maintain that its new tanker design – which has yet to be built – is superior to that of its competitor, EADS, which is already producing its own tanker overseas. If Boeing is so sure it has the best plane, why is it resorting to desperate legislative tactics engineered to rig the outcome?

Boeing's supporters are evidently still in denial that Alabama is a part of the United States. They charge that only Boeing can deliver U.S. jobs. Meanwhile, EADS is poised to hire at least 3,000 workers in Mobile and along the Gulf Coast and support another 40,000 jobs nationwide should it win the KC-X tanker competition.

Honoring Our "Honor Flight South Alabama" Veterans:

On May 12, Washington, DC rolled out the red carpet for some 92 war heroes who travelled all the way from South Alabama to the nation's capital to lay a wreath at the national World War II Memorial.

For most, if not all of these South Alabama veterans, it was their first trip to see the relatively new World War II Memorial which honors their service and sacrifices over 65 years ago to free Europe and the Pacific and preserve liberty here at home.

I was on hand to greet and present them with a copy of a Congressional Record tribute honoring their historic journey as well as a U.S. flag flown over the Capitol commemorating their visit.

It was moving to see those from America's "greatest generation" tearfully embrace their comrades and even the general public as they personally experienced this moment.

My staff and I work for you. If we can ever be of service, do not hesitate to call my office toll free at 1-800-288-8721.