

Felipe de Jesus Calderon Hinojosa of Mexico; Prime Minister Stephen Harper of Can-

ada; and Warren J. Riley, superintendent, New Orleans Police Department.

Statement on the Death of Representative Stephanie Tubbs Jones *August 20, 2008*

Laura and I are saddened by the death of Chairwoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones.

As a proud lifelong resident of Ohio's 11th District, she devoted her career to serving her community at both the State and national levels. She was an effective legislator who was dedicated to helping small businesses, improving local schools, expanding job opportunities for Ohioans,

and ensuring that more of them have access to health care. After making history as the first African American woman elected to Congress from Ohio, the Congresswoman worked to expand the rights of all Americans. Our Nation is grateful for her service.

Our thoughts and prayers are with her son Mervyn Leroy Jones II and the rest of her family.

Remarks Following a Dinner With Elected Officials and Community Leaders in Gulfport, Mississippi *August 20, 2008*

The President. Governor, thank you for coming.

Governor Haley R. Barbour of Mississippi. Thank you, sir.

The President. I thank the United States Senators—Senator Wicker, Senator Cochran—Congressman Taylor, mayors, supervisors—county supervisors, small-business owners, high school teacher. Thank you all very much for giving me a chance to come and visit with you.

I have brought—you know, a member of my administration, United States Marine General—retired—O'Dell is here to listen to people. We still understand there are issues, but I do want to say something about the progress. I remember what it looked like right after the storm. I remember what it looked like in the first anniversary right after the storm. I remember what it looked like last year, Governor. And things have improved a lot.

Are there still people wondering about their future? Absolutely. Do they still have other issues to deal with, like cleaning out some of the bureaucracy so that the housing issue can get solved quicker? Absolutely. But things are better here on the Gulf Coast of Mississippi.

And one reason they're better is because you've had strong leadership, and the other reason—at the State and local level. And the other reason is because people refused to give in to the storm. People picked up their lives and decided that this is where their home was going to be and made something out of these communities.

I remember going to the schools right after the storm hit and seeing the determination of the teachers and principals about how—whether they had to be in a trailer or in a old building, they were going to teach these kids. And the spirit of southern Mississippi is real, and it's alive. And

the leaders here around the table know better than me what I'm talking about.

So I appreciate you giving me a chance to come. I told people that I'm almost through, but I'm sprinting to the finish. This is not the farewell dinner. [Laughter] But this is an opportunity to come and listen to what's on people's minds, with the idea of continuing to work with the elected officials to solve problems and make sure this is even better 6 months from now than it is today.

At any rate, I want to thank you. Food's good here too. [Laughter] I appreciate your time, Governor. Thank you.

Gov. Barbour. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:28 p.m. at Vrazel's Fine Food. In his remarks, he referred to Maj. Gen. Douglas V. O'Dell, Jr., USMC (Ret.), in his capacity as Federal Coordinator, Office of Gulf Coast Rebuilding.

The President's Radio Address *August 23, 2008*

Good morning. Before they left Washington for their August recess, Congress failed to take action on an issue that is currently of great concern to Americans: high prices at the gas pump.

The fundamental reason for high gasoline prices is that the supply of oil is not keeping pace with demand. To reduce pressure on prices, we need to increase the supply of oil, especially oil produced here at home. So in June, I called on Congress to open up more of America's domestic oil resources for exploration, including offshore exploration of the Outer Continental Shelf. The American people overwhelmingly support this proposal. But throughout the summer, the leaders of the Democratic Congress have refused to allow it to come to a vote.

Now that the pressure to take action has become overwhelming, Democratic leaders in Congress have changed their strategy. Rather than attempting to block expanded drilling by preventing a vote, they are now attempting to block it by bringing up a bill that is designed to fail.

News reports indicate that Democratic leaders in Congress may plan to hold a vote on a bill that would make us more dependent on foreign oil and would likely

make energy costs go up, not down. This bill would raise taxes on energy companies, which would reduce domestic production. This bill would make the Nation more vulnerable to supply shocks by tapping into our emergency supply of oil, the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. And it would impose a rigid national mandate that would increase electricity costs in States where there are few renewable resources.

Democratic leaders know that these counterproductive proposals will not become law. Yet they seem ready to push this legislation as a way to block offshore drilling while appearing to be in favor of it. They need to stop standing in the way of expanding domestic production and take meaningful steps now to address the pain caused by high energy prices.

I've proposed a comprehensive approach to our energy problems that would permit a range of new drilling options and encourage the development of alternative resources. If Democratic leaders will not approve this comprehensive approach, the very least they should do when they return in September is to take action on three commonsense energy solutions that enjoy bipartisan support.