

Franks (NJ)	Martinez	Sessions
Ganske	McCarthy (MO)	Shaw
Gillmor	McCollum	Shays
Gordon	McInnis	Shuster
Hastings (FL)	McIntosh	Spratt
Hefley	McIntyre	Stark
Hilliard	McKeon	Talent
Hulshof	Meek (FL)	Taylor (MS)
Kanjorski	Metcalf	Taylor (NC)
Kaptur	Morella	Thompson (MS)
Kasich	Neal	Visclosky
Kennedy	Owens	Waters
King (NY)	Peterson (PA)	Watt (NC)
Klink	Pickering	Watts (OK)
Kolbe	Pickett	Weldon (FL)
LaFalce	Porter	Weygand
Lantos	Radanovich	Wise
Lazio	Ros-Lehtinen	Wynn
Lipinski	Rush	

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So the joint resolution was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON H.R. 4577, DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2001

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer the motion to instruct that I presented yesterday pursuant to clause 7(c) of rule XXII.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). The Clerk will report the motion.

The Clerk read as follows:

Ms. DELAURO moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the bill, H.R. 4577, be instructed to insist on the highest funding level possible for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program in FY 2001 and FY 2002.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the rule, the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG) each will be recognized for 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO).

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Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, we had a very cold winter this past winter, and not only people in my community, but people all across this country, seniors and working families, saw their budgets stretched to the limit, making choices between food and heat and rent and heat and other kinds of cruel choices that they should not have to make.

Last winter, the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, LIHEAP, provided critical assistance to low-income families facing skyrocketing home heating oil prices. Eligible families were able to receive assistance and to defray high heating costs. LIHEAP has proven to be one of the most important safety nets that this government offers to low-income families. However, this program is chronically underfunded. Since 1995, there has been approximately a 35 percent drop in the

number of households that receive LIHEAP assistance, due to a reduction in funding levels.

Mr. Speaker, winter is just around the corner. These same groups are confronted again with high energy prices. Home heating oil prices are projected to rise an estimated 50 percent, and natural gas is expected to increase 40 percent. Winter bills are likely to increase \$290 more than last winter, which was the warmest on record.

When the average recipient is the poorest of the poor, those averaging a household income of less than \$10,000 per year, these costs are unconscionable. Households are forced to pay high energy costs, will be forced to reduce those budgets again, for food, for medicine and other household necessities. Current funding levels will not sustain the large rise in energy costs. As a result, additional LIHEAP funds are needed to allow the program to purchase the same amount of home energy as was purchased last year.

As elected officials, we do not have the ability to manipulate weather projections to prevent a harsh winter, though we kind of think we can do whatever we would like to do. We are in a position, however, where we can use the offices that we have to increase funding for a proven program that will provide one of the most basic needs. The President did the right thing a month ago by releasing \$400 million in emergency LIHEAP funds. I urge my colleagues to do the same: fund LIHEAP at an adequate level to make sure that those vulnerable groups have the means to keep themselves warm this winter and next; funded at the level of \$550 million and also, that we forward-fund for \$1.6 billion for the year 2002.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to advise the gentlewoman that we do intend to support this motion to instruct, but before we get to that point and actually formally accept it, I wanted to point out that we have already agreed to fund the LIHEAP program above the President's request, not only for this year, but for next year as well. The LIHEAP program was fully funded in the preliminary conference agreement at the President's requested level of \$1.1 billion for fiscal year 2001, plus an additional \$300 million for any emergency that might develop. With recent negotiations, we added another \$300 million to this program, bringing the total funding for fiscal year 2001 to \$1.7 billion. We have agreed to advance-fund another \$1.4 billion for fiscal year 2002, so that States will be able to adequately plan for next year. The President requested only \$1.1 billion for next year, so we again are above the President's request.

We have also provided an additional \$600 million in the fiscal year 2000 sup-

plemental bill this past spring, the same amount requested by the President for emergency spending in this program for this year because of the recent increases in fuel prices. So we have really gone above and beyond the President's request; but we understand the importance of this program, and we do not want any to suffer through the winter without adequate heat, and we are not going to allow that to happen.

I might also say that there are some States where an extremely hot summer also causes severe problems, and deaths occur because of excessive heat, and we are not going to allow that to happen. We are also going to provide cooling assistance for those people who are exposed to that type of temperature fluctuation.

So the gentlewoman and I, I think, are together on this; and I think both sides of the aisle are together on this, so we are more than happy to accept her motion to instruct.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I thank the gentleman; and I might just add that that while, in fact, the President did put in \$1.1 billion, there are a number of us who also spoke not only with the majority party here, but also with the President about increasing those dollars, because of the fact that, particularly those of us who in the Northeast and some other places where we have extremely cold winters, that, in fact, what we needed to do was to see those numbers increased.

The other reason why we have moved in this direction is because, in fact, over the years, this program has been dreadfully undercut in terms of costs, and there has also been the reluctance to forward-fund to the following year, which is critically important in order for us to move forward.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS).

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me this time, and I thank her for bringing forth this very, very important resolution.

It is no secret that in this country we are facing a major energy crisis. It is no secret that the price of home heating oil, propane, kerosene, natural gas has been increasing very, very substantially. It is also no secret that we are the richest country in the history of the world, and that it would be an absolute outrage if any senior citizen, if any low-income American went cold this winter or had to take funds from their food budget in order to pay the heating bill. This is America, and elderly people should not go cold or should not go hungry.

Last month, I authored two letters signed by over 100 Members of Congress, including 20 Republicans, and the first letter urged the President to immediately release \$400 million in emergency LIHEAP funding to deal with the energy crisis we are currently facing, and I am grateful that the

President did that. The second letter urged Congress to increase funding for LIHEAP by 50 percent, from \$1.1 billion to \$1.65 billion for both fiscal year 2001 and fiscal year 2002, and that is what we are discussing here right now.

The issue is one of priorities. There are people in the Congress who have voted for huge tax breaks for the richest 2 percent of the population. If people are prepared to vote for tax breaks for millionaires, we should be absolutely certain that no one in America goes cold this winter. Let us substantially increase funding for LIHEAP and ease the minds of elderly and lower-income Americans that this winter will not be a brutal one.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GOODLING), who is chairman of the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I, of course, rise in support of the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program, LIHEAP, that provides badly needed Federal energy assistance to the poor through funds to the States, permits States to help low-income individuals pay home heating or cooling bills, and pay for the low-cost weatherization of their homes.

LIHEAP is a critical lifeline for low-income families, individuals with disabilities, and senior citizens. We have worked to ensure that the lifeline is strong enough to help those who are unable to afford the costs of heating their homes through the severe winter months and the costs of cooling their homes through the sweltering summer months.

In fiscal year 1999, 3.4 million households received help with their heating bills, and 748,000 households received winter crisis aid. In addition, cooling aid was provided to an estimated 480,000 households, summer crisis aid to 194,000 households, and weatherization assistance to 87,000 households.

It is important to keep in mind that the House already voted to appropriate \$1.4 billion for 2001; and as the chairman said, the appropriators have gone well above what the President has requested. We have done our duty.

Now, it is irresponsible, however, for this administration, for 8 years, to fail to develop a coherent energy policy that would have addressed these skyrocketing costs associated with continued reliance on foreign oil. Would it not have been more appropriate for our Democrat colleagues to join with us in calling on this administration to get its collective head out of the sand on our long-term energy needs? As good as LIHEAP is in providing assistance, it is needed because fuel costs are not kept in check. Our fuel costs have not been kept in check because this administration will not come to terms with the long-term energy problems we continue to face.

So, today we have before us a short-term fix for a very long-term problem.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute and 15 seconds for a question for the chairman.

Mr. Speaker, in the gentleman's remarks, did he say included in the appropriations bill, which I understand we have not come to a vote on that bill yet, but that there was the \$1.65 billion in forward-funding for the year 2002?

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. DELAURO. I yield to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, what I said was, and let me double-check that, we have agreed to advance-fund \$1.4 billion.

Ms. DELAURO. So that it is not the \$1.65 billion that would bring it up to the same level we are talking about?

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. No, if the gentlewoman will again yield, it is \$1.4 billion. The President requested only \$1.1 billion, so we went \$300 million over the President's request.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, we are asking for 2001, and as I understand it, the gentleman said it was \$1.7 billion for the year 2001. That must have been something that just happened, because it was not at that level earlier. But I am talking about the year 2002 in forward-funding, it is \$1.4 billion.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, if the gentlewoman will yield, that is correct; and this is the amount that the administration agreed to and the minority agreed to.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman said \$1.4 billion?

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. DELAURO. Well, we are asking for \$1.6 billion.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes and 10 seconds to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOAKLEY).

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join the gentlewoman in calling on the Congress to appropriate \$1.65 billion this year and next year for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

Mr. Speaker, as many of my colleagues here today can tell us, there is a winter fuel crisis looming on the horizon; and we need to act, and we need to act immediately. With energy prices rising at record levels all over the Nation, we need to ensure that our most vulnerable citizens are able to get the heating oil that they need. The LIHEAP program helps seniors, helps working low-income families heat their homes in the winter and cool their homes in the summer.

Mr. Speaker, without this assistance, many Americans would be forced to choose between heating and eating. Mr. Speaker, no one should ever have to make that choice. Because of OPEC's production cuts, our oil stocks are 30 million barrels below what they were last year, and even last year's supply was much too little.

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It is no surprise that as a result of that low stock that the prices are as high as they are.

Before senior citizens have to choose between buying groceries and paying their utility bills and before families discover that they cannot keep their children warm enough, my Republican colleagues need to act. For these people, heating their homes is not a luxury, Mr. Speaker. It is really a matter of life and death.

It is a tremendous program. It is a very important program, but it is woefully underfunded. For the past 3 years, we have funded LIHEAP at the same flat level; and, Mr. Speaker, as anyone in Massachusetts can tell my colleagues, that level has not kept pace with either inflation or fuel costs.

As a result, for the last 3 years, fewer and fewer eligible families have received assistance. If nothing changes, about 10 percent of the people who need help will get help. It is time this Congress acted to make sure people receive the LIHEAP help that they so desperately need, and I urge congressional appropriators to recognize how important LIHEAP is by including \$1.65 million in this fiscal year.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Pennsylvania, (Mr. ENGLISH).

Mr. ENGLISH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida (Chairman YOUNG) for yielding the time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise as a long-time strong supporter of the LIHEAP program to support this motion. LIHEAP, indeed, has been underfunded for many, many years, and it is an important priority for this year to put more funding into LIHEAP.

Let me reiterate the point that the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG) has already made, under the President's budget, he had proposed only to fund LIHEAP to the tune of \$1.1 billion, plus \$300 million for emergency funding. The position that had been worked out on our side of the aisle with some collaboration was that instead, we would put in \$1.4 billion for the LIHEAP program, plus \$300 million for emergency funding.

Mr. Speaker, I think there is a strong case to be made for increasing beyond the \$1.4 billion. But let us understand what is really at work here. As the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GOODLING) noted, one of the real problems here is that we have a failed energy policy in this country.

We are anticipating this winter that energy costs are going to go through the roof; and that is going to have a huge impact on low-income households, seniors and others are going to be forced to choose between heating and eating, as the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOAKLEY) noted. That is because not only have we underfunded LIHEAP, but also because we have not placed regulatory policies that are antiproduction.

We need to tackle this problem from a number of different directions. Yes, let us increase LIHEAP funding; but that in, itself, is no excuse for not having an energy policy in this country.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that one of the things that often does not come out in these debates is when people just make flat-out statements about energy policy in this country. The fact of the matter is, in 1995, the Republican majority in this body cut the weatherization programs by about 50 percent. They continually underfund any kind of research and development into energy alternatives, biomass, wind, solar, et cetera; and then come out and talk about an energy policy.

These are very, very big pieces of an energy policy, and which they have continuously, continuously undercut the President's request and other Members' request for these things.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Maine (Mr. BALDACCI).

Mr. BALDACCI. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) for this resolution and for yielding me the time; and her leadership on these issues are greatly important as we address them on a national stage.

The first thing I would like to address is the issue about funding. The \$1.6 billion that is being discussed in this resolution and the \$1.4 billion that was forward funding leaves a gap of \$200 million, whether it was in the President's budget or it was in the negotiations or the discussions.

The reality is people are paying \$77 more per month higher than normal bills and, on average, are going to pay \$464 for the season because more people are asking for the assistance in Maine. 50,000 Maine households, 50,000 Maine families were given the help they needed to make ends meet. So the explosion in the numbers utilized, the cap agencies that have been trying to take the applications have a waiting list as long as you can see; and we are here not funding adequately to the level that we are funding this year.

Mr. Speaker, recognizing that, on average, families are going to be paying \$602 more for a heating season. In reference to an energy policy, I think it is highly ironic because every year the administration tries to raise the fuel efficiency standard in automobiles, there has always been a congressional earmark to prevent it from happening.

When we tried to establish a Northeast Heating Oil Reserve, the leadership on the other side did not support it, dragged their heels, and did not even give the President the authority to release from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. And I would argue, as a Northeasterner and many Northeasterners pay attention to fuel oil prices, it was almost reaching \$40 a barrel when the President announced he was going to release from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, and the prices are now \$31 or \$32 a barrel.

So the actions that the President and the administration have been able to take through executive action have had an impact. The amount of money that has gone for emergency assistance has been helpful. It is now Congress' part, yet again, to do its responsibility in adequately funding LIHEAP to make sure that not only forward funding but forward funding to the levels that are necessary, and anybody that does not think the prices are going to increase is just fooling themselves.

As a friend of mine used to say, they go up by telegraph but they come down by pony express; and if we do not recognize that we have to adequately fund it this year, then we are just fooling ourselves and putting it off for next year. I think together we should recognize that heating one's home, whether in Maine or anywhere else, is not a luxury.

At every level, local, State and Federal, public servants should take the steps that are necessary to ensure that not a single resident, not a single resident is left out in the cold, and we should complete our work here today on the House floor.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 2 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I take this additional time to say one of the reasons that it has taken us so much time to conclude these negotiations is they cannot take yes for an answer. We agreed to this motion to commit. I said we are at \$1.4 billion, which was the request of the minority and the President; and we agreed to the \$1.4 billion.

Now my colleagues are moving the goal post again. Now my colleagues are going to go to \$1.6 billion. We are going to agree to the \$1.6 billion. But then are my colleagues going to come back and go to \$1.8 billion and \$1.9 billion?

Why do we not do this all at one time and save the time for negotiation?

On gas prices, the great political move of releasing from our Strategic Petroleum Reserves was simply that, political, because, first of all, it was about worth a day and a half of our consumption in the United States.

But let me tell my colleagues what happened. The oil was sold to a company who bought the oil and then turned around with a nice big profit and sold it again before it got to the refinery and the consumer.

Now, how did that affect those of us who put gasoline in our vehicles? It did not affect me. And I do not think it affected anybody in this Chamber, because when I buy gas and the people in my neighborhood buy gas, the price of gasoline did not go down one penny since the release of the oil reserve, maybe others in other parts of the country have better news than that.

But I can tell my colleagues that my constituents did not save even a penny a gallon on the release, the political release, of that strategic fuel oil reserve.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GOSS), my distinguished colleague, the chairman

of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

(Mr. GOSS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG), my friend and colleague, the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Appropriations for affording me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate him; and I want to congratulate the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) for working in a bipartisan way to deal with what has actually provided some relief for some people who have need.

I think this is Congress doing its thing. I think we are, in fact, rescuing the administration from some bad policy consequences that have taken place. I think it is good that the American people can look and see that here we are on a Saturday focusing on these kinds of problems and responding to them in a very, very positive way especially, I would also say, in a bipartisan way.

I think that one of the things that has been addressed slightly here, and I have heard a little so far in the debate on this about the underlying problem, heating oil is not something we have just discovered and the need for it and the need for it on an affordable basis.

We have debated for a long time how we go about providing affordable heating oil. Incidentally, coming from Florida, we are interested in low-cost energy as well because we have a lot of senior citizen who need to have some climate control. When it gets very hot in the summer, we have the reverse problem. And we actually do need to provide air conditioning for some of those folks, sadly enough we have death in this country during hot spells as we all know, and providing appropriate air conditioning is an equal cost.

I come from New England, so I understand the LIHEAP problem. But I live in Florida and proudly represent the southwest coast of Florida, the lower part of it; and I understand the other problem as well. We have to provide an answer for the whole problem. That gets us to the energy policy.

I honestly believe that we do not have a comprehensive consistent energy policy that works. I am afraid that if we had an energy policy, it would have been confounded by what is now a clearly failed foreign policy in the Middle East, I am sorry to say. I am sure we are all sorry to say that.

I know that the Secretary of Energy, Secretary Richardson, who is a fine man, a former colleague of ours, has gotten up and announced that the administration was indeed caught asleep at the switch on their energy policy. I think I am using his words, maybe it was caught napping or asleep or something. But anyway, he basically said they had been inattentive. They had not done their job, and he is right.

I noticed that there was some talk about the release of the surplus and the

impact on the marketplace. I think from the cards and letters and talking to the people I talk to and representing the people I represent, nobody noticed that we had any relief at the gas pump.

I think my colleague, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG) is right, if there was any relief, we sure did not see it. I do not know who else did.

Apparently, it did not help the people with the LIHEAP heating cost problem in New England much either. Actually, the amount of energy involved was a day and a half use, a day and a half of consumption. So that was a gesture, that was not a solution.

Mr. Speaker, I think that it is worth noting that just yesterday, Saddam Hussein manipulated the oil market price again; and that has a bigger consequence than anything that the executive branch has done so far to solve the oil crisis and the LIHEAP concerns that we are talking about here this morning.

Now, most Americans when they go out in the morning, they want to turn the key in their car; and they want their car to start. I know that the candidate of choice from our friends across the aisle is suggesting that somehow when we turn our car key that our car is going to come running into life and start and take us to work on some kind of new magic technology that has not been invented yet, so that we are not going to need oil and gas and internal combustion engines.

Well, that is fine, but I have to go to work today and tomorrow and the next day; and that magic technology is not here. Until it is here, thank you, we need to find affordable oil.

Mr. Speaker, we have talked about what happened in places like Chicago, how the regulations of the EPA confounded the price of gasoline, how the infrastructure failure and the refineries failed to be able to provide for the marketplace demand. All of these kinds of things have come together and we are not talking about that. We are talking about, there is a problem, Government handout.

I think the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG) was on a correct path, when he suggested that if \$1.4 billion is not enough, then \$1.6 billion, \$1.8 billion. Where does this end? This ends in providing socialized, free oil for everybody in America. Great idea.

They tried it in Russia, the most corrupt systematic problem of the Soviet command marketplace was probably the gas pump and it still is. So that is not the solution.

We need an energy policy; and I hope our friends across the aisle will help us encourage the next administration, whichever side it is on, of developing a good energy policy. I would point out I think those who are aware of the oil and gas industry might be able to do better with an energy policy, and I would suggest that America might be well served by having some people who know about energy making decisions about energy.

Mr. Speaker, the other point that is sort of curious to me is that I have heard some talk about people being in the pocket of oil and gas. Oil and gas is what we need. That is what we are out there trying to find right now.

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If there is anybody that doubts it, do not go to the gas station when one runs out of gas. Wait for the next solution to one's car. Then see how far down the road one gets.

So I am very happy that this has come forward. I think we need to find a realistic underlying solution to energy policy. In the meantime, it is entirely appropriate that Congress, in a bipartisan way with Republican leadership, is providing relief. I congratulate the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG).

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 2 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I think this all sounds well and good, and it is very nice and a very nice speech. But let us take a look at the facts. Since the 1980s, there has been unprecedented attack on energy conservation programs by the United States Republican Party.

Reagan-Bush repeatedly proposed to zero out energy efficiency and renewable energy programs. Quite frankly, it is their legacy, shortsighted energy policy that has put the gas pump prices as high as they are today. My colleagues refused to invest in energy independence. This year alone, Republicans cut renewable energy research \$106 million below the President's request in the Energy and Water bill; it was \$211 million in the President's request for energy research in the Interior bill.

I mentioned before 50 percent cut in the important weatherization assistance programs. Not too long ago, 35 Republicans last year, including the major leaders of their party, wanted to cut and abolish the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

I might add that this was one of the first Republican proposals on energy policy when they took the majority was to kill the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Programs, the same families that are trying to pay for their heating bills and their cooling bills which they talk about today. They also wanted to count LIHEAP payments as income for the purposes of determining assistance on their food stamps.

They have not been for an energy policy. They have not been for the LIHEAP program. So the speeches sound nice, but the facts are there.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL).

(Mr. DINGELL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) for this

motion. I want to urge my colleagues to support it.

But I want to say a few words about energy policy. I keep constantly hearing from the other side of the aisle, and I say this more in sorrow than in anger, that this country needs an energy policy. The simple fact of the matter is we have an energy policy. That energy policy is the energy policy that was crafted by Mr. Reagan, by Mr. Bush, and by a group of Republican Presidents, with the support of their Republican colleagues in this Chamber and in the other Chamber.

The simple fact of the matter is, it is a free market policy. It is one which says, let the market go to whatever levels that it will go to, to rise or to fall, without government interference. That is the energy policy of the United States.

To implement that energy policy, which I think is probably, in good part, unwise, my Republican colleagues have sought at different times to cut money for SPR, to sell off SPR. It has shown itself in budget and appropriation actions led by my Republican colleagues.

They have also opposed energy conservation measures, the use of alternative fuels and programs which would enable this country to move, not in absolute terms totally towards independence, but at least in good part.

It should be noted that it is not long back that my Republican colleagues were criticizing SPR as taking oil out of one hole in the ground and putting it in another hole in the ground.

More recently, they have come out and have criticized SPR and have tried to cut back on it. They have tried to sell it off. They reduced the amount of money which we have put into this thing. They have generally been critical of that program.

Having said this, the policy is there. It is a policy that was crafted by Reagan, by Bush, and by their Republican colleagues up here. It is a policy which does not consider the good needs and the important concerns of this country, to have a ready supply of emergency oil available through SPR. It is also a policy which does not consider the need to have conservation measures in place functioning and working.

My Republican colleagues over there have consistently sought to prevent this country from having fuel efficiency standards for appliances, for refrigerators, for water heaters, for air conditioners. The curious thing about that opposition is that it was done in opposition to the policies that were stressed by that industry, which recognizes, not only their social responsibility to have a good energy use in the appliances which they create, but also that the country needs that kind of thing because it is necessary for the conservation of energy and for the readiness of the United States in times of crisis.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT).

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I want to join others in giving credit to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG) and the gentleman from Connecticut for really, in effect, working together to see that the purpose of this resolution has been achieved. I think that everybody is clear that this particular item will come out of the conference. So our effort here today to instruct the conferees will have incredible success, Mr. Speaker, since we know that this has already been done.

But we have to be here today for some purpose as we wait for the President to come back from California, maybe in Florida next, but we are waiting for him to come back from California now. We are waiting for White House negotiators to reengage. We have to be here, so we may as well be here to talk about some issue.

I have the highest, highest regard for the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL). It has been an honor to be able to serve with him on the Committee on Commerce, to see his great understanding of the rules and traditions of the House, and to try to, just by watching him, learn from some of that understanding of what we do and how we do it.

I am sure he is also aware that we have not had a Republican President for the last 8 years. So how the energy policy of the country is still reflective of that is a surprise to me.

But I was also surprised when the Department of Energy could not secure our nuclear codes. I was surprised when they could not maintain our most important and critical security information. So maybe I am just here to be surprised.

I think taxpayers, voters, people who are at the gas pump understand that a Department of Energy that cannot watch those two briefcases is likely not to have its eye very closely on the price at the gasoline pump. That is what has happened there.

While we are here, though, talking about issues that are already accomplished in terms of the additional money for LIHEAP, it is going to happen, I would like to take just a minute to talk about something that has not been done yet; and that is to encourage the President when he does return from California, and he does get the tax bill we passed this week, to sign that tax bill.

That tax bill is likely to be, I would almost bet will be the last opportunity we have in this Congress to vote on tax relief, in all likelihood the last opportunity we have to vote on Medicare adjustments. How this President could let that tax bill go unsigned and even, in fact, veto the bill would be something hard for the American people to understand.

The message we got on Tuesday, interestingly, did not use the word veto. In fact, it carefully did not use the

word veto. When the bill was ready to be voted on on Wednesday, we get another letter that says, like all tax relief, it is just somehow not quite good enough. They were for all for these tax cuts in theory, but they are never for a single one of these tax cuts in practice.

I hope the President carefully rethinks that, looks at the pension modernization and things that relate to both pensions held by union members, the 415 issue, small businesses that really are hampered today in offering pension protection to their associates and employees. This bill opens the door for small business to be able to compete with big business in offering pensions.

It expands the IRA amounts in a way that begins to catch IRA contributions up with what has happened since IRAs were first enacted. In terms of Medicare, there is tremendous help for seniors in Medicare, more help for rural hospitals, more help for rural nursing homes, long-term care. Tax credits are given in this bill and should be extended to the American people. The Medicare provisions lower out-of-pocket costs. They put more doctors in emergency rooms, more ambulances in rural areas.

I hope the President reconsiders his veto threat, looks at this bill again, and gives the kind of relief and kind of Medicare assistance this bill gives.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, might I inquire as to the time remaining on both sides.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). The gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG) has 11 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) has 14 minutes remaining.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 10 seconds. The gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) who was speaking, it might be interesting to note that just last year voted to abolish Strategic Petroleum Reserve. Someone who was concerned about our national security ought to be concerned about the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER).

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) for bringing this to our attention.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the original intent of their instruction was to talk about LIHEAP. We have gone far afield and I am going to join the field. But I must say that it was a bipartisan coalition of us who pushed very hard to get the President of the United States to open up SPR and give up some of the reserve because those of us who live in the Northeast had gone through a very bad winter last year and this year looked bad. We had seen people have to go into shelters because they could not afford to heat their houses and pay for food. We do not want to see that happening again.

There was almost a panic starting to set in. Whatever one may think about

the release, it worked, obviously he did not release enough to see us through the winter. We did not want him to. It did have the effect of making the OPEC countries reduce the price of oil. It has been beneficial, and I again thank him for doing that.

Now, with talking about the alternative fuels and lack of energy policy, I agree we surely do not have one.

I remember the golden age of exploration, under Jimmy Carter's administration, when we talked about hydro-power, geothermal power, wave power, wind power, photo power, photovoltaic cells, and the grand daddy of them all, fusion. We were really intent in the United States to making sure that we would not forever be dependent on foreign oil.

But that came to a screeching halt in 1980 with Reagan, and we went back to the old way of allowing oil companies to do what they would with us and, as a previous speakers said, let market forces have their will with us.

I appreciate the bipartisan support that we have from the Northeast. I understand that in Florida they have some problems with weather. But they do not know what it is like when people are freezing.

My city of Rochester last year had more snow than any city in the Northeast of comparable size. If we want to have an energy policy in this country, we have got to get back to putting a little money in for some research and development, or we will have this debate forever.

But there is no doubt and history shows that the Reagan administration killed renewable energy resources and money for research.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA).

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, this debate on Saturday is not about people freezing to death or support for or against LIHEAP. Republicans are for providing energy assistance to low-income, disabled, the poor, elderly. There is no debate about that question here today.

We are here on Saturday because the other side is in desperate straits. They are trying to bail out their failing Presidential campaign, their congressional failing campaigns across the country, because the American people have finally said that we have had enough. We have had enough of the partisanship from the other side of using this arena and putting politics before people.

This is not about low energy assistance. It is a great program. It is a program that has grown from \$50 million during the energy crisis, I believe, of the 1970s to a \$1 billion program. It is a little bit of difference about helping people, making certain that the program works.

Even the President of the United States, I remember, presented us with budgets that proposed some trimming, some economy in this program. But we are for providing assistance to the poor and the disabled.

But, Mr. Speaker, we are here on a Saturday because they want to put politics before people. We have HMOs closing around this country. I had a gentleman write to me and said, "You all are debating whether I can sue an HMO. I have been dropped by my third HMO which went under."

Nursing homes are closing around this country, and the poor and elderly are being deprived of care because they want to put politics before people.

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It is sad, but I heard George W. Bush say the other day it is sort of a fitting end to the close of an era of contentiousness, an era of disgrace; that they, the American people, I think, want to put behind them. It is sad that we are here now, and they are using this as a last stage putting people behind politics. It is not about LIHEAP, it is not about people freezing to death, it is about changing the direction of this country.

They had their chance. I heard the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TRAFICANT), a Democrat, say they had 48 years, not mentioning the last 8 years, and they blew it. This is not about LIHEAP. It is about changing the direction of this country. It is about other issues at the last minute, like putting provisions in at the last minute to provide amnesty to millions of illegal aliens.

I was offended today when I heard someone say that we did not know on the Republican side about immigration. My grandparents were immigrants and they came in legally to this country, not illegally, and they worked in the factories of this country and they toiled. But if we throw in this provision to allow millions, we have cast aside our laws. What good are our laws? We might just as well tear up our laws and throw them away.

What does it mean to be an American if the President can cast aside the very basis for immigration. What made this country great is people coming here legally under the laws. So this is not about LIHEAP, this is not about low-energy assistance, it is about other greater issues.

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a joint resolution of the House of the following title:

H.J. Res. 118. Joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2001, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 1761. An act to direct the Secretary of the Interior, through the Bureau of Reclamation, to conserve and enhance the water supplies of the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON H.R. 4577, DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2001

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to comment that it is interesting to note it was the Republicans first proposal, when they took charge here, to kill low-income energy assistance, the LIHEAP program.

Yes, it is about LIHEAP today and people being warm in this country, particularly in those areas of the country where it is cold, like the Northeast.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELAZQUEZ).

Ms. VELAZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from Connecticut for this motion. I rise in strong support of this motion.

I ask my colleagues, on behalf of millions of needy families, that we maintain the current funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, better known as LIHEAP. It is of critical importance to the families in my district and across the Nation.

Although current funding for the program is low, this conference report lowers it even further. I do not believe that any of my colleagues wants to be held responsible for a family or an elderly person living in the cold because they cannot afford heating this winter, especially in this prosperous country. The Republican majority has cut this program every year. While they are warm in their own homes they slash this program with cold hearts.

The purpose of LIHEAP is to help pay the winter heating bills of our most needy low-income and elderly individuals. Two-thirds make less than \$8,000 a year. They are the poorest of the poor. Last year, this program helped 4.4 million households. Mr. Speaker, we are not just talking about comfort here, we are talking about the health and sometimes even the lives of some of our citizens. The Boston City Hospital reports that the number of clinically underweight children increases dramatically following the coldest months, and we all know the tragic stories each year about some elderly person dying in an unheated home.

LIHEAP is most crucial during the peak winter heating season when high energy bills eat up to 30 percent of a family's budget. And this winter, heating oil prices are expected to rise 20 to 40 percent, consuming even more of the average budget. Without LIHEAP, many low-income families and elderly people will have to choose between heating their homes and paying for food, medicine, and rent. I rise in strong support of this motion.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire about the time that remains?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). The gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG) has 7 minutes remaining and the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) has 9½ minutes remaining and the right to close.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY).

Mr. HINCHEY. Mr. Speaker, I want to remind my friend, the gentleman from Florida who was here at the podium a few moments ago, that this issue is about energy policy and it is about people being cold and it is about people surviving this winter. That may not be true if one lives in Florida, but it is true for those living in New York or New Hampshire or Pennsylvania or Ohio or Wisconsin or Michigan. This is a critical issue for people in all those States. So it is important that we raise the level of LIHEAP funding.

I also want to express my appreciation to the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, because, earlier this month, I asked for a request of \$8 million to fund the continued operation of the President's initiated Northeast Home Heating Oil Reserve, which is now funded. But I also want to say a couple of things about energy policy in this country and who is directing it at this moment, because that policy is being directed by the oil companies.

The three largest oil firms are currently reporting quarterly profits that double last year's earnings. Leading the way was Exxon-Mobil, which 3 months ago posted the largest quarterly profits ever for a U.S. corporation. It beat that record just a couple of days ago with the announcement that it had earned \$4.3 billion in the third quarter. Chevron-Texaco, which announced last week that it will merge, and Conoco all reported that their profits have doubled just recently.

Exxon-Mobil's vice president is quoted as saying, "We've got a lot of cash around here. It's coming in pretty fast. Flying through the door." So while Americans are struggling trying to pay their home heating bills and the gasoline bills to get back and forth to work, the energy companies are racking up record profits.

The oil companies are not using their profits to invest in new oil and gas exploration, which would ultimately lead to lower prices, decreased dependence on foreign oil, and greater stability in the market. Instead, what they are doing is using the profits to repurchase their stocks so that they can raise the stock price.

We ought to have the Committee on Commerce convene immediate hearings on the outrageous profits of the oil companies. That is a responsibility that we place on the other side of the aisle. Immediate hearings to determine what is going on.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY).

(Mrs. LOWEY asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the motion to instruct conferees to provide full funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

Before I make a few points, I just want to agree with my colleague, the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY), and I would encourage the FTC