

The verdict will be issued on Saturday. We in this House must take a stand. The agricultural appropriations bill comes up, and I will have an amendment to deny the use of funds to allow the importation of agricultural products from Iran and, thus, re-institute the policy of Ronald Reagan to prevent those goods from coming in at this time.

PORKER OF THE WEEK AWARD

(Mr. HEFLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, imagine how many single family homes and apartment buildings could be built for \$1 billion. That is the amount the Inspector General at the Department of Housing and Urban Development reports has been wastefully spent.

In several different reports, the Inspector General details wasteful spending ranging from overpayments to pure abuse. One report identified \$935 million in Federal housing subsidy overpayments during 1998 in HUD's assisted living programs. The overpayments resulted from the HUD's inability to accurately know if recipients qualified based on income or housing benefits. It has been estimated that \$935 million could provide housing assistance to 150,000 needy families.

Another report on a Bronx, New York, housing project uncovered ineligible and unnecessary expenses totaling \$258,000. The audit uncovered expenses totaling \$26,000 that was either unnecessary for the project's operation or not supported by adequate documentation, including \$13,000 for unnecessary telephone charges and \$10,000 for unnecessary cab fares.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development gets my porker of the week award.

PLIGHT OF THE IRAN 13

(Mrs. LOWEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to the plight of the 13 Iranian Jews that have been held for over a year on trumped-up charges of spying for Israel and the United States. After months of incarceration, coerced confessions and show trials, the fate of these 13 will be decided this weekend by a revolutionary court judge who alone will make a decision whether these 13 will live or die.

The arrest of these innocent people was in itself an outrage, but the Iranian government has doggedly pursued these false charges, denying the defendants representation and visitation from their families, and using them as a pawn in the ongoing ideological tug-of-war of Iran's future.

We have read and heard that the so-called moderates are slowly eroding

the power base of Iran's hard line clerical leadership, but I do not see the evidence. There is no religious freedom in Iran, there is no respect for human rights and due process in Iran, and anti-Semitic, anti-Western scapegoating persists in Iran.

A country like this has no place among the community of nations; and the United States, as the premiere defender of democracy around the world, should make no overtures to welcome Iran. I join my colleagues telling Iran that we are watching.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

(Mr. CALVERT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, as co-chairman of the Generic Drug Equity Caucus, I would like to talk about generic drugs and how they make prescription drugs more affordable.

Currently, generics fill over 40 percent of all prescriptions in the United States and are extremely affordable, at only 10 to 15 cents per dollar spent on brand names. The Congressional Budget Office reported in 1994 that generic drug competition results in a cost savings to consumers of \$8 to \$10 billion annually, while meeting the FDA's requirement on bioequivalence, meaning that generics have the exact same effect on the human body as brand names.

Too many of the brand name companies seek to extend their patents, thereby restricting prompt market access by generics and raising drug costs. Americans have a right to be concerned about the high cost of prescription drugs. The solution could be as simple as encouraging the use of generic substitutes and providing co-pay differentials between brand name and generic drugs, and preventing abusive marketing and regulatory practices.

INTERNATIONAL ABDUCTION

(Mr. LAMPSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, today I want to talk about Marcus Farina, one of the 10,000 American children who have been abducted to foreign countries. Marcus was abducted when he was 5½ years old by his noncustodial father, Sergio Farina. It is believed he was taken to South America.

Mr. Farina picked up Marcus on December 6, 1991, for his first court-ordered unsupervised visit and never returned. Marcus's mother, Patricia Rose Diggs, has been working diligently on this case since his abduction. Evidence came to light that Mr. Farina went to Brazil before he went to Uruguay. It is believed Mr. Farina left Marcus in South America and has traveled without him. He still has family who live in Uruguay, and they have all been interviewed by law enforcement to no avail.

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children has created a poster on the child, and it now includes an age-progressed picture of Mr. Farina. Mr. Farina is fluent in English, Spanish, and Portuguese and has many friends and contacts throughout South America.

Mr. Speaker, Marcus's mother and others like her need our help. Children deserve and need to grow up with both parents in their lives. I hope that my colleagues will continue to work with me to bring our children home.

GAS CRISIS

(Mr. CHABOT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, the first summer of the new millennium is well under way. Americans have been looking forward to summer vacations with their families all year. Unfortunately, they are discovering that the temperature is not the only thing rising this summer. Across the Nation, gas prices are shooting through the roof; and American families are feeling the pinch in their wallets.

But since the beginning of the gas crisis, the Clinton-Gore administration has been missing in action. In fact, Energy Secretary Bill Richardson even admitted that "we were caught napping." The response of the President's spokesman, Joe Lockhart, to the high prices was, "Prices tend to go up a bit this time of year."

Well, Mr. Speaker, it is high time that Secretary Richardson and the rest of the administration woke up. The Vice President, AL GORE, has long tried to increase gas prices and taxes on gas as a way to get us out of our cars and supposedly to clean up the environment. Well, he is getting his way.

Let us face it, we are not being gouged at the gas pumps, we are being gored.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS NEEDED

(Mr. GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, yesterday we witnessed one of the biggest legislative shams of the 106th Congress. This Congress did not pass a prescription drug benefit to help our seniors; we passed an insurance policy.

From the Patient's Bill of Rights to education funding, my colleagues have used Democratic rhetoric to masquerade their bad ideas. They are using the same old strategy, watered-down legislation to ultimately secure its failure.

We did not even get a vote on an alternative. The Republican bill costs seniors more each year, but it gives them less. It was either their way or the highway. Well, our seniors see through this sham, and maybe in November they will give them the highway.

Today, I have seniors from my own district, from my home, visiting D.C. They are from the Magnolia Multipurpose Center in Houston. And I have to tell them that, yes, they now have a benefit; but only if their insurance policy decides to give it to them. And who knows how much it will cost.

Mr. Speaker, we should be providing lifesaving pharmaceuticals to seniors, not an insurance policy. We should be providing a secure, stable and reliable benefit instead of creating a bureaucratic nightmare. And we should be building up Medicare, not tearing it down. Our seniors deserve more than a voucher.

TRUCKERS SUFFERING DUE TO GAS CRISIS

(Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, America's truckers are a vital part of our economy. Truckers deliver the food we eat, the clothes we wear, and the materials we use to build our homes.

Unfortunately, for the past several months truckers have been hit particularly hard by rising fuel prices. These outrageous fuel prices are threatening the livelihood of thousands of truckers across the United States. When truckers cannot afford to fill their tanks, they will be forced off the road. Without trucking, commerce in our Nation would grind to a halt. With gas prices continuing their steep rise this summer, an even greater number of truckers are being threatened.

Energy Secretary Bill Richardson has admitted that the Clinton-Gore administration was "caught napping" when it comes to fuel prices. And now the American people are forced to foot the bill for the Clinton-Gore failure. How unfair.

CONDEMNING ACTIONS OF IRANIAN GOVERNMENT

(Mr. VISCLOSKEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. VISCLOSKEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to condemn the actions of the Iranian government against 13 members of that Nation's Jewish community. The citizens arrested over a year ago have been accused of spying for Israel. Ten of the 13 have been in prison since their arrest last year. All have been brought before a court with no jury, in which the judge also serves as the prosecutor, to face accusations that they have not heard, without the assistance of a lawyer or any contact with their families or friends.

This would, unfortunately, not be the first time a show trial in Iran resulted in the deaths of members of the Jewish community. Since the Islamic revolution in 1979, 17 Jews have been executed in Iran. I say it is time for this to stop.

I call on those in Iran who represent reason and reform to intervene and prevent a brutal outcome to this trial.

GAS PRICES SOARING OUT OF CONTROL

(Mr. SCHAFFER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, Americans are taking to the roads for summer vacations. At least that is what they would like to do.

Regrettably, rising gallons prices may keep many Americans from taking summer vacations this year. Gasoline prices are soaring out of control. In the Midwest, those prices are nearing \$2.50 a gallon.

Americans across the Nation are paying for the failed energy policy of the Clinton-Gore administration. Thanks to them, our Nation is more dependent on foreign oil today than it was during the gas crisis of the Carter administration. Worst of all, the President famous for saying "I feel your pain" has an Energy Secretary who admitted he was "caught napping" when the energy crisis hit our Nation.

Well, Secretary Richardson should wake up and pay attention. Americans cannot afford much more of these outrageous gas prices. Americans are tired of getting gored at the pump.

REPEAL GAS TAX DURING GAS CRISIS

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, we have a Vice President who wants to do away with the internal combustion engine. And I guess that is fine, for the inventor of the Internet, who thinks all the world should go to the office on the information highway.

But with that information in mind, for the past 7 years we have had an administration that has locked up the strategic oil petroleum reserves in America, choking off our own domestic supply. We have had an administration who has taken great pride in blowing up dams out West, even though we get 10 percent of our energy from hydropower. And we have an administration who has closed off our oil pipelines in Alaska.

As a result, today Americans are paying anywhere from 50 cents to 75 cents to \$1 a gallon higher at the pump. It does not have to be this way. We need to have a coherent, cohesive energy policy that says if we need to be weaned from this evil internal combustion engine, let us do it so we do not have the hardships that we have at the pump for the American middle-class family.

I think we should repeal the 18 cents per-gallon gas tax and give Americans some relief.

GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY FOR PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE MISSED

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, yesterday we missed a golden opportunity to make prescription drugs more affordable for America's seniors. We passed a sham Republican leadership bill that fails to give all the seniors the Medicare prescription drug coverage that they so richly deserve.

We need to have a prescription drug benefit that is affordable, that gives doctors the right to prescribe medications, that addresses soaring costs; and yet the proposal yesterday does not accomplish any of those goals. It does not cover all seniors, it does not give doctors and seniors the right to choose the best medications, and it does nothing to address the skyrocketing prices of prescription drugs.

The Democratic plan would provide American seniors with an affordable, voluntary, and reliable prescription drug coverage. The plan is firmly rooted in the Medicare program that seniors know and that they trust. In contrast, the Republican plan is complex, and it is built on an already failing HMO system.

The Republican leadership forced through this plan that gives seniors false promises and false hopes. It might be the right remedy for the insurance companies, but it certainly is the wrong remedy for America's seniors.

□ 1030

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SKEEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and that I may include tabular and extraneous material on H.R. 4461.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COOKSEY). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Mexico?

There was no objection.

AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2001

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 538 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 4461

□ 1031

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 4461) making appropriations for Agriculture,