

The bill rolls back authority currently given to our Federal Trade Commission to deal with price gouging. It seems to target smaller retailers while limiting the areas that can be investigated for price gouging. According to a September 1 Wall Street Journal article, after Hurricane Katrina, unleaded gas prices surged 36 percent in just 3 days, pushing the wholesale price average up 132 percent above a year ago. And this massive increase occurred despite the fact that in the same 3-day period, the price of crude oil went up just 4.25 percent. Over the past year, crude oil prices have gone up 64 percent, so that means that the wholesale price of gasoline jumped nine times as fast as the price of crude in 3 days and is running more than double the increase of crude over the past year. And these companies are just swimming in the windfall benefits.

So instead of renewing our vows to imported oil, we need to be developing new renewable energy sources here at home: wind power, solar, biofuels, fuel cells, hydrogen, clean coal. We consume 25 percent of the world's oil production, spending tens of billions of dollars to import oil from some of the most unstable and undemocratic regions of the world. At the same time, we have only 3 percent of known reserves.

According to a study done for the National Resources Defense Council, if we were to follow an aggressive plan to develop cellulosic biofuels over the next 10 years, we could produce the equivalent of nearly 7.9 million barrels of oil per day. That is equal to more than 50 percent of our current oil use for transportation and more than three times what we import from the Persian Gulf alone. We have more than 5 million vehicles on the road right now that will run on 85 percent ethanol and a growing number that run on biodiesel blends of 5 percent or higher. The people who drive these cars in many cases do not even know it, and if they do, they cannot find the fuel in their home communities because we have not done enough to make these renewable and less costly fuels available to our own constituents. What a shame.

Some want us to keep drilling. They do not care where. It could be in a critical water area like the Great Lakes. Perish the thought.

In my view, we do not need to drill any more holes in our own heads. What we really need is an energy plan that develops self-sufficiency from renewable sources and a plan that not only calls for renewable fuel standards but provides support for the infrastructure and public education campaign to get there. A country that could land a man on the moon can do this as well. We need resolve right here in this Congress.

I urge this Congress to take a giant dose of Beano and cast a resounding "no" vote on the Gas Act of 2005 that will come up tomorrow. We can and surely must do better for our children.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MCCAUL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MCCAUL of Texas addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. KUHL of New York. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. SCHMIDT). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

RECOGNIZING ELMIRA COLLEGE'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. KUHL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KUHL of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize the sesquicentennial of one of the greatest educational institutions in my district of upstate New York, Elmira College. Elmira College turned 150 years old on October 2, just a couple of days ago this year.

Elmira College was the first college for women with a course of study and degree requirements equal to those of the Nation's finest colleges.

On October 23, 1853, the Regents of the University of the State of New York granted a charter to the college, and the cornerstone of the building that would later come to be known as Cowles Hall was laid in June of 1854.

In October of 1855, Elmira College opened its doors to its first students, and the great, historical Cowles Hall still stands as a monument to women's college education in Elmira and the United States.

Elmira College is sometimes known as "the mother of women's colleges." The official college colors, purple and gold, were taken from the colors adorning the banners of the women's suffrage movement and from the college flower, the iris, which is also the name of the college yearbook published each year since 1896.

Its location in Elmira, the commercial and cultural center of the Finger Lakes region, was through the efforts of Simeon Benjamin, the college's earliest benefactor, often referred to as "The Founder." Benjamin was instrumental in the selection of the college's first president, Dr. Augustus Cowles, after whom the college's original building was subsequently named.

Another of the college's founding trustees was Jervis Langdon, whose daughter Olivia, an alumna of the college, later married Samuel Clemens, to most of us also recognized as Mark Twain. To this day, Elmira college has been closely associated with Mark Twain, who wrote many of his best known novels in Elmira, in a structure,

the Mark Twain Study, which was relocated to the Elmira College campus in 1952.

Elmira college became coeducational in all of its programs in 1969 and quickly achieved an even gender balance. Entering its 15th decade, Elmira College continues its commitment to provide a sound liberal arts education while strengthening its professional programs. Its standards of academic excellence resulted in the award of a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa in 1940.

College traditions are cherished. The Sibyl, one of the oldest student-literary magazines in the country, has been published continuously since 1876. Mountain Day, faculty and administration "Patron Saints," the Midnight Breakfast, and the Holiday Banquet are among the many traditional activities which enrich college life.

While academics are a priority at Elmira College, school spirit emanates from its students through athletics. Elmira College offers 26 varsity and junior varsity teams and intramural sports as well. Elmira College strives for excellence both in the classroom and on the field by embracing the student athlete. Fifty-six percent of the students maintain a grade point average of 3.0 or better. National rankings and post-season tournament play have also been annual traditions for the Soaring Eagles. Most recently, the women's ice hockey team has made four consecutive NCAA tournament appearances, including winning the National Title and sporting an undefeated season in its inaugural season.

On the one hand, Elmira College is securely rooted in the local community by a tradition of excellence, "town-gown" relations and reciprocal sharing of resources. A good example of this is the public lectures presented by the internationally known Mark Twain scholars who are brought to Elmira by the college's Center for Mark Twain Studies. Another example is the college's community service program, which has been commended by the President of the United States.

At the same time, the college expands its worldwide view with opportunities such as its various innovative projects offered in an intensive 6-week spring term made possible by the distinctive academic calendar. While proud of its history and traditions, Elmira College looks ahead to the future.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SCHIFF addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

TRIP TO IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Madam Speaker, here is a quote: "Victory means exit strategy, and it's important for the President to explain to us what the exit strategy is."

Those words were not spoken by a Member of Congress, not by a prominent opponent of the Iraq War. They were not even spoken about this President or this war. Those words were spoken in April, 1999, about President Clinton's military campaign in Kosovo, and they were spoken by a Republican Governor named George W. Bush.

What a difference 6½ years makes because it is precisely an exit strategy that is missing from our Iraq policy. With 2,000 of their fellow citizens dead and 1 billion of their tax dollars being sent to Iraq every week, the American people have a right to some honest answers to some important questions like: What exactly defines victory? What are the benchmarks of success? What is the long-term plan? What does the end game look like?

We are paying for this war in blood and money. My home district lost a 23-year-old soldier on Saturday. Why will the President not repay us with some honesty and transparency? Why does he insult us with empty platitudes about "staying the course" and "staying in Iraq as long as it takes"?

Madam Speaker, I had the privilege of traveling to Iraq last week with a few of my House colleagues. We were briefed by the commanders on the ground. We saw the military facilities, which I am happy to report are state of the art. The quality of our soldiers' medical care in particular is excellent as far as I could see. Good equipment and the best docs that one could have.

The most rewarding and enlightening part of the trip was simply having meals and talking with the enlisted men and women, mostly those from California and particularly from my district north of the Golden Gate Bridge.

Madam Speaker, these young people are the very best America has to offer. They are brave. They are intelligent. They are loyal, loyal to their country, to their mission and to each other. They are profoundly committed to this mission, even those who told me privately they do not support the policy that underlies it.

These are genuine heroes whose courage and resolve are greater than our accolades can convey. We truly have the most capable military the world has ever known. So what is the problem?

The problem is that we do not have leaders in Washington that are worthy of these fine soldiers. Our troops have not failed. They have been failed by their civilian superiors, those who sent

them to Iraq on false pretenses, on a poorly defined mission without all the tools they needed and without a plan to get them out of there.

This morning's speech from the President was the same old shopworn rhetoric: Terrorism bad, freedom good. We know that and we agree, but that alone does not justify an open-ended military commitment. What comes next? Do not tell us. Show us. Show us that there is some kind of long-term strategy to return Iraq to the Iraqi people and the troops to their families back home.

If the President will not lead, then we will. Last month, I assembled a group of Middle East experts and military strategists to explore viable and compassionate exit strategies.

□ 2130

I do not have all the answers, and I am not prepared to endorse a single approach, but I have felt for many months now that it was about time we started this conversation about troop withdrawal and started throwing ideas out and on the table.

Madam Speaker, our troops have endured enough sacrifice. We need to plan to bring them home.

At the same time, we must give Iraq back to the Iraqi people through a range of economic, political, and humanitarian partnerships. The American people deserve better than the poor planning that has characterized every phase of this war, and the extraordinary men and women whom I met in Iraq most certainly deserve better. They deserve leaders as courageous and honorable as they are. In return for their unfailing loyalty, they deserve basic competence and integrity.

COORDINATED STRATEGY OF CHARACTER ASSASSINATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. SCHMIDT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCHENRY. Madam Speaker, tonight I think we need to speak about the partisanship that is not just encountered here in Washington, D.C., not from the people just here in this body, but the partisanship we have seen from a prosecutor down in Austin, Texas. It is part of a coordinated strategy that those on the other side in this House have. It is a coordinated strategy of character assassination.

A couple of months ago I spoke before the House, and I outlined a few simple things. I said the Democrat leadership has led their party on a campaign against Republicans, against the Republican majority of this House, through a conspiracy of character assassination and misleading attacks.

The U.S. News and World Report wrote back in April: "Democratic strategists, confident that voters are increasingly fed up with the Republican establishment, are planning an

all-out attack on what they call 'the abuse of power' by the Republicans."

I said at the time the liberal magazine, the New Republic, published an article entitled: "How Democrats can Overthrow the House," this House, Madam Speaker, and I quote from that article: "Democrats should consider fighting back by extra-parliamentary means, going beyond the standard parameters of legislative debate, and attacking Republicans not on issues, but on ethics, character. In other words, it may be time for Democrats to burn down the House in order to save it."

Those are not my words, Madam Speaker. Those are the words of the liberal New Republic outlining the Democrat strategy to take the majority in this House. "Burn down the House in order to save it," they say.

Well, at the time, a lot of people thought that what I was outlining was something that was far off; that maybe it would not happen; that maybe we would have some high-minded individuals on the other side that would say enough is enough. This is not the right strategy for America; it is not the right type of political discourse we should have in this country. But, no, no, no, we saw this just a week ago with a partisan prosecutor in Austin Texas named Ronnie Earle.

After impaneling seven grand juries, he was able to come up with one charge, conspiracy; conspiracy against our majority leader, our Republican leader in the House. Well, as it turns out, those charges, not only were they false but they also were based on a statute that was not in effect at the time that they claim these events happened.

What we saw was a partisan prosecutor that was so focused on scoring political points that it did not matter what the law said; and so on Monday, he came up with a new charge based on new evidence, he claims. After going through seven grand juries, Madam Speaker, after going through 2 years of investigating our Republican leader, intent on taking him down, they said in 2 days they came up with new information and came up with a new charge.

It is an amazing thing that has happened. The American people have heard it before by watching the TV. They know the details of this.

But I want to outline what a former U.S. Attorney from the Southern District of New York, Andrew McCarthy, outlined. He said, "Ronnie Earle, district attorney of Travis County, Texas, has no business wielding the enormous power of prosecution. A matter of national gravity is being pursued with shocking ethical bankruptcy by the district attorney, by Ronnie Earle. If Congressman DELAY did something illegal, he, like anyone else, should be called into account. But he, like anyone else, is entitled to procedural fairness, including a prosecutor who not only is, but also appears to be, fair and impartial."