

telling the oil industry you can go ahead and do the same thing because I will not act; when three times Democrats stood proudly to have a bill to allow the FTC to investigate this price gouging and the Republicans voted in lockstep against it, you could anticipate the levees would be topped, and you could anticipate that the oil companies would run rampant with the price of gasoline.

Now, how has this President responded? He wants to do this thing with a slow one-half of one-third of 1 percent increase in production to do something about it. If your house is on fire, the President would bring you a thimbleful of water, and that is the only assistance we are getting. We need real action, not these baby steps.

REFINING CAPACITY

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

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam Speaker, we all know that gas prices are very high right now, but one of the reasons that gas prices are high is that we haven't built or expanded a refinery in this country for 30 years, and the reason is because the environmental extremists won't allow that to happen. That is one of the reasons there is not enough supply for the demand out there. It is very simple. That is what it is, supply and demand.

Our refineries right now are operating at maximum capacity. They can't pump out any more gas to the people of this country. So we need to expand domestic production. We need to expand refining capacity in this country. It is critically important we do that, and that in return will help to reduce gas prices in this country.

So we need to build these around the country and to build them with geographical diversity as it relates to the refining capacity. Katrina underscored that, because 40 percent of our refining capacity is down in the gulf, and it was affected by Katrina. We saw gas prices go up when they were affected. So one of the things we need to do is spread refining capacity around the country.

One of the best places to build a refinery in this country is Cushing, Oklahoma. I say that not only because I am from Oklahoma, but because nine major oil pipelines intersect in Cushing. We have the infrastructure in place already and the supply there. It is about a near perfect place to build a refinery in this great country. We need it desperately. Let's make it a megarefinery producing 500,000 barrels a day.

GAS PRICES

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

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Speaker, it is breathtaking what President Bush and

congressional Republicans will say or do when it comes to skyrocketing gas prices. In discussing tax breaks for oil companies, the President said yesterday, and I quote, "RECORD oil prices and large cash flows also mean that Congress has got to understand that these energy companies don't need unnecessary tax breaks."

Coming from the single greatest champion of tax breaks for oil companies that the Oval Office has ever known, that is rich. The President has spent the last 5 years fighting for these tax breaks that he now disavows. Last year's energy bill, which he signed, had \$8 billion of corporate welfare for oil companies. For him to suggest now that he opposes these tax breaks is, in my opinion, dishonest, cynical, and the height of hypocrisy.

When it comes to solving the energy crisis, President Bush and his Republican Congress have no credibility. Had they spent the last 5 years working to reduce demand by raising fuel standards, rolling back the billions of dollars in tax breaks and royalty relief to the big oil companies; and if he were about promoting alternative fuels, as Democrats have proposed, we might now today be on the road to energy independence. Instead we are bracing ourselves for \$4 gas prices.

The American people expect leadership from their President and Congress, Madam Speaker. They are not getting it from either.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from referring to the President in personally offensive terms.

COMMONSENSE APPROACH TO BORDER SECURITY

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

Mr. KELLER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to talk about a commonsense approach to border security. I recently conducted three town hall meetings throughout central Florida. The message I received from my constituents was loud and clear: our first priority must be to secure our borders and enforce the law. After that we can then determine for ourselves how many workers we need for construction, agriculture, landscaping, and other jobs.

It is really a matter of common sense. For example, imagine there was a bucket of water sitting next to a wall. Just above the bucket is a faucet turned on full blast. Your job is to take a ladle and remove the water from the bucket. You could do that job for the rest of your life, or common sense would tell you to first turn off the faucet, then it would be much easier to decide what to do with the remaining water.

Let's use our common sense and make securing our borders and enforcing the law our top priority in Congress.

NINETEEN DAYS UNTIL BUSH RX DRUG TAX TAKES PLACE

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

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, when are House Republicans going to stop being a rubber stamp for President Bush and join us in being on the side of seniors and the disabled instead of the pharmaceutical companies?

House Republicans don't have too much time left to make the right decision. As this calendar shows, Congress has only 19 days left to act on behalf of millions of American senior citizens who have still not chosen a drug plan. Despite a multimillion-dollar campaign and months of heavy promotion by the administration, only 8 million uninsured Medicare beneficiaries have voluntarily signed up so far for a private drug plan, leaving 14 million seniors still without any drug coverage.

Well, some of these seniors have simply determined that the new prescription drug plan will not help them and their prescription drug bills. Others are still navigating through dozens of different plans hoping to find one that will help them. House Republicans should not add to this pressure by supporting the President's unreasonable May 15 deadline.

House Republicans should join the Democrats in extending the deadline until the end of the year. As we mark off another day, the countdown continues.

DEMOCRATS CAN'T HAVE IT BOTH WAYS

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, you know, as we are talking about energy, and as we are talking about fuel prices today, it is quite amazing to watch selective memory and revisionist history take place within this Chamber. To my liberal colleagues I would simply say: you cannot have it both ways.

And I hope we are learning a lesson from what we are hearing in this Chamber and from what we are seeing in the papers. Thirty years of environmental extremist policies on energy consumption in this Nation leads to the situation that we have today. For 30 years we have not been able to build new refineries because of environmental regulations. For 30 years we have not been funding exploration and development of new sources. Couple that with what has happened with Katrina and Rita, and, yes, we have a painful situation with energy prices.

Let us learn the lesson. Let us come together and let us be certain that we are thoughtful and that we realize our Nation depends on an energy source that is going to be consistent and supply lines that are going to be open.

□ 1030

VICTIMS RIGHTS WEEK

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

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak on behalf of the Victims Rights Caucus which Congressmembers POE, HARRIS and I chair. We have introduced a resolution that recognizes what many Americans know all too well: crime does not know any geographic, demographic, or political boundary. It touches all of our communities.

We support the Victims Rights Week and the Crime Victims Fund, legacies that President Reagan and Congress passed in the 1980s. The Crime Victims Fund is distributed to service providers who assist millions of crime victims annually throughout our communities in a host of ways. It is paid for by fines levied on criminals, not taxpayers.

Yet today, our caucus is fighting to protect that fund from this administration's wrongheaded attempt to balance the budget on the backs of victims by putting those dollars into the general fund. That is simply wrong.

We must ensure that this fund is used for its original intent: to provide for crime victims, to provide for probation departments, and to help the victims who truly need and deserve our assistance to hold offenders accountable.

PASS LOBBYING REFORM

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

Mr. PENCE. Madam Speaker, after months of scandal and years of deficit spending, millions of Americans fear that this Congress is fiscally and ethically bankrupt.

This week, thanks to the bold leadership of Speaker DENNIS HASTERT, Congress will consider historic lobbying reform legislation that will bring new transparency to the relationship between lobbyists and lawmakers, and I applaud it.

But as important as these changes are, we must also change the way we spend the people's money here on the floor of this Chamber. And this legislation also includes commonsense reforms in earmark spending that will end an era of unaccountable pork-barrel spending in Congress.

It is said that righteousness exalts a nation, and meaningful lobbying reform and earmark reform will lift the spirits of the American people demoralized by years of disappointment from Washington, D.C.

I urge my colleagues to come together in the spirit of that high standard and this privileged service and support lobbying reform legislation.

GOP IGNORED ENERGY PROBLEM FOR 5 YEARS

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

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, it is hard to believe that when President Bush took office in 2001, the average price of gasoline was \$1.65. Since that time, on both the President and Congressional Republicans' watch, gas prices have doubled, leaving everyday families squeezed to afford other necessities.

Washington Republicans have had 5 years to develop a comprehensive energy proposal that would not only free America from reliance on Middle East oil, but would also crack down on price gouging and market manipulation. Instead, almost immediately after taking office, the Vice President began holding secret meetings with oil and gas company executives to create a special-interest energy plan. The secret Bush administration energy plan was finally rubber-stamped by the Republican Congress last year.

Under this energy plan, oil companies got at least \$20 billion in both tax breaks and royalty-free drilling rights, while hardworking Americans got stuck with the bill.

It is no wonder that their initials are G-O-P: Gas, Oil and Petroleum. Democrats refuse to do the dirty work of the special interests and are demanding that this Congress crack down on price gouging. It is time House Republicans join us in providing some real relief to the American consumer.

ENERGY SOLUTIONS

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Madam Speaker, in 1995 President Clinton, led by his environmental hard-core left-wing friends, vetoed drilling for oil in the Alaska National Wildlife Reserve. Now, had he signed that bill in 1995, which had passed the Senate and the House, we would have a 20 percent higher supply in domestic oil, 1 million barrels of gas each day more than what we have in our current supply. How big is the wildlife reserve? It is the size of South Carolina. How big is the exploration area? About 2,000 acres.

How many of the environmentalists and how many of the Democrats drove to town today in an SUV that makes 15 miles a gallon? We could use that supply. It is not the total answer, but it is part of the answer. And the Democrats always conveniently overlook that 10 years ago their President vetoed a bill that would have increased domestic gas supply today 20 percent.

There are other solutions that we are continuing to work on, and I hope that we can get them to join us on them.

REPUBLICANS REFUSE TO HELP CONSUMERS WITH GAS PRICES

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

Ms. WATSON. Madam Speaker, yesterday the Republican-controlled House returned from a second spring break recess. Today is the 116th day of 2006. Remember, you set the House schedule.

Would you believe, Madam Speaker, that this is only the 22nd day we have had votes here in the House this year? That is 22 days out of a total of 116. We indeed are a do-nothing Congress.

House Republicans simply have not focused on the concerns of average Americans. Today, Americans face record prices at the gas pump. In some areas, gas prices are hovering around \$4 a gallon. Since President Bush took office in 2001, gas prices have doubled, and yet for 5 years now, House Republicans have done absolutely nothing to address the problem. They passed an energy bill last year, but the Bush administration's own Energy Department admitted that it would not do anything to reduce gas prices.

Madam Speaker, it is time for House Republicans to stop sending us home for breaks. The American people were rightfully demanding a solution to the energy crisis. It is time for the do-nothing Congress to do something.

BETTER ENERGY POLICY IS POSSIBLE

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

Ms. MCKINNEY. Madam Speaker, the American people seem wedged between record oil company profits, half-billion-dollar retirement packages for oil executives, and a Federal energy policy that just does not work. Now Americans have to choose between not only medicine through a prescription drug plan that is a boon to pharmaceuticals and a doggie to the people who need the drugs, but the people are also being victimized by a secret energy plan drawn up by oil barons. For years, people like me have been saying that this Nation needs to decrease oil dependence, that it was depletable, causes global warming, was not worth destroying ANWR or waging wars over.

Better policy is possible, but we won't get it from this administration of oil barons.

ENERGY SOLUTION NEEDED

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