

must work to retain our time-honored spirit of scientific leadership. Math and science are invaluable pillars of a strong education; and our schools, in coordination with organizations like FIRST, will ensure the creation of a new generation of world leaders, but only if we are proactively committed.

PRICE OF GASOLINE

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the price of gasoline is \$3 a gallon. Americans want answers, and they want solutions. According to the American Petroleum Institute, the nationwide average of tax on gasoline is 45 cents a gallon. This is split between State and Federal governments. The oil companies make about 9 cents a gallon on gasoline, so Washington, D.C., makes more off a gallon of gasoline than the oil companies.

Congress should consider suspending part of the gasoline tax for a period of time to lower gasoline prices. Gasoline prices are going up because OPEC controls 50 percent of the world's crude and is driving up the price of gasoline. The U.S. needs to be drilling offshore. Now we only drill off the coast of Texas, Louisiana, and Alabama. There is crude out there in our gulf coast and east coast and even the sacred west coast.

We can't have it both ways: Refuse to drill offshore and have cheaper gasoline prices. It is not going to work. We can drill safely offshore, and we need to do so to prevent being held hostage by third-world countries. Mr. Speaker, that's just the way it is.

CHILD SAFETY ACT

(Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to thank the hardworking law enforcement that have captured an escaped child sexual predator, Michael Benson, making our family safer. I commend John Walsh and his program, America's Most Wanted, on their 888th criminal apprehension out there making sure that we are putting these predators behind bars.

But 8 months ago, we passed the Child Safety Act; and in the Child Safety Act we have provisions that keeps our families, our children safer. Yet it is being obstructed in the Senate. It is time for us to move forward, pass this legislation that is so vital to our children's protection. I call for action and call on my colleagues to join me.

□ 1930

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CAMPBELL of California). Under the

Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

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

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

PHARMACIES ARE IN TROUBLE

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the gentleman's time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Kansas is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, much of what I am about in Congress is about the fight to preserve and enhance the opportunities that exist in rural America. My goal, among others, as a Member of Congress is to see that there is a future for the communities and the people who live there across my State. I represent one of the most rural districts in the country. A component of that is to make certain that the citizens of those rural communities can access adequate and affordable health care.

We often think of health care as a hospital or a physician. Tonight I rise with great concern about a development across our country and especially in rural America that is occurring in regard to the loss of community pharmacy. We are beginning the process of losing that Main Street business and that health care provider, the community pharmacist.

In many communities across my State, and I am sure it is true around the country, that community pharmacist is struggling and the doors are beginning to close. Examples: today in Kansas, southeast Kansas, the population less than a thousand people, that pharmacist is closed for the last 4 months, no other pharmacist in the community. The next pharmacy is 30–35 miles away. This has an impact not only upon the hospitals and doctors in that area, but clearly an impact upon the community members, the patrons of that pharmacy, those who rely upon the health care to be delivered by that pharmacist.

My own father, 90 years old, rarely sees a doctor because if you see a doctor, that doctor will tell you something is wrong with him, and he does not want to know that. But he relies upon his community pharmacist because he is there drinking a cup of coffee to put the blood pressure cuff on his arm and provide him advice and suggestions about a healthy life.

That community pharmacist is an important component of our business community, and it is a way we deliver

health care in communities across our country.

Due to the consequences of the prescription drug bill part D, our community pharmacist's future is bleak. In part it is due to the lack of timeliness of the payments that are occurring. The average wait in Kansas is 45–60 days. When I was in Leoti, Kansas, in March, and Leoti is a community of about 900 people, that community pharmacist had not been reimbursed for one prescription drug bill delivered to a senior since January 1.

Almost all pharmacists in my district and across the State have had to take out a line of credit just to stay in business. I want to highlight a bill that has been introduced by the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) and by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BERRY) and a bill by the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) that would require those sponsors of those drug plans to promptly pay the submitted claims.

It is unacceptable that a pharmacist would have to wait 2 months to be paid for the bills, and it is unacceptable because it is wrong. It is not the right thing to do, but it is a terrible occurrence because it means the demise of his or her business.

In addition to that, almost all pharmacists lose money on the prescriptions they fill under the Medicare plan part D, and the sponsors of those plans allow almost no negotiating room for those pharmacists. We need to change that. I would highlight a bill that I and the gentleman from New York (Mr. WEINER) have introduced, the Community Pharmacy Fairness Act, to give independent pharmacists the freedom to ban together to negotiate with drug manufacturers.

Time is of the essence. Pharmacist Kody Krein from St. Francis, Kansas, he grew up in that town. His life goal was to return to St. Francis as a community pharmacist. He has given us until July 1 and then he will make a decision whether he can continue as the sole pharmacist in that town. His three kids are in the school system in St. Francis, Kansas. It would be a terrible thing to lose that community pharmacist, to lose his family, and to lose that man's hope for a career in his hometown. That does not happen enough in rural America where a young son or young daughter actually is returning home to the family community. There is no pharmacist in the St. Francis area for 35 miles. We have a short period of time before we can correct this.

You may say this is a handful of examples. I am exercised about this issue. It is troublesome to me that this Congress, this place, Washington, D.C., has become so political that we cannot address this issue, that if an issue is brought to the floor that we are fearful that the Democrats will make an issue of it, that we have come to the point where nothing is done because there are political consequences to the issue even being discussed.

There are challenges and problems that are created by part D that need to be addressed. These issues are so important to me that it is time for us to set aside the political bickering and actually address the needs of the country. It is a political place that we work in. We all know that, but the problem is that we simply cannot use politics as an excuse to do nothing. It is time for us to make certain that good things occur and we cannot be responsible for the loss of a business, the loss of a family, and the loss of three students in a classroom in rural communities across our country.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that we no longer delay, that we bring attention to this issue to the House floor.

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

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

MISSION NOT ACCOMPLISHED

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of turn.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentlewoman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, exactly 3 years ago yesterday, President Bush gave his speech about the military operations in Iraq and said they had become "Mission Accomplished."

Why was this speech important? Because in a single stroke, it revealed more about the President and his administration than all of his other speeches combined. Paying attention to the news, you will recall how on that day President Bush, adorned in a fighter pilot suit, rode shotgun in a military jet that landed on the USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN aircraft carrier, and a massive banner declaring "Mission Accomplished" was brashly displayed in the background during his subsequent speech.

It seemed like a bold act put on by a President who wanted to be perceived as taking bold steps against our Nation's enemies. But nothing had actually been accomplished to that point. The problem is that the "mission" in Iraq was not accomplished 3 years ago, and it certainly hasn't been accomplished today, which makes the military jet landing and ensuing speech 3 years ago far short of bold. It was a grandly staged political stunt, pure and simple.

Let us talk about "Mission Accomplished." For whom exactly is this mission accomplished? Is the mission accomplished for our troops, many of whom have returned home from Iraq forever changed as a result of the physical and mental trauma they endured

during years of repeated deployment to Iraq?

One such soldier is retired Naval Hospital Corpsman Charlie Anderson who last Thursday spoke at an Iraq forum that I organized. Charlie suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder and now is a regional coordinator for Iraq Veterans Against the War.

I quote him in saying, "I was completely untrained and unprepared for what I experienced in Iraq." He also told us, "In the 7 years preceding my deployment to the Middle East, I had not set foot in the desert or had any training on how to fight or survive there. I had fired my 9 millimeter service pistol exactly once."

Is the mission accomplished for Faiza al-Araji, an Iraqi civil engineer who recently fled Baghdad, the only home she has ever known? Faiza and her family left Iraq after her son, a student, was detained for days by the Ministry of the Interior without charges being filed. After nearly a week of panicking, Faiza and her husband paid a ransom to have their son released. They were told he had been detained because he had a beard, and was therefore probably a terrorist.

The fact is, 3 years after President Bush's "mission accomplished" pronouncement, Iraq is still mired in chaos. Our troops are still sitting ducks. They are halfway across the world, and the United States is still tangled up in a quagmire of epic proportions.

Of the over 2,400 American soldiers who have been killed in Iraq, all but 139 were killed after the President's USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN speech. Attacks against Iraqis, U.S. and coalition troops, and critical infrastructure have increased by nearly 25 percent since then.

According to the Brookings Institute, the Iraqi insurgency has tripled in strength since 2003. It is pretty clear by now that the "Mission Accomplished" speech was just another example in a long pattern of the Bush administration playing up the political theater while ignoring the facts on the ground.

Whether they are talking about tax cuts for the richest 1 percent of Americans, prescription drug coverage that does not work for seniors, or the cost of military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, this administration's MO is to avoid revealing bad news at all cost, even if it means toying with the truth. It is like all of the bad stories are cut out of the newspaper before they are brought into the White House.

Mr. Speaker, let us accomplish something that will help secure America and Iraq for the future and save thousands of innocent lives in the process. Let us accomplish an end to the pain and suffering felt by the hundreds of thousands, and let's end the war in Iraq and bring our troops home now.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentle-

woman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

WHAT TO DO ABOUT SOARING OIL PRICES

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim my 5 minutes at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, gasoline prices are soaring and the people are screaming, and they want something done about it now.

\$100 rebate checks to American motorists will not cut it, nor will mandatory mileage requirements for new vehicles. Taxing oil profits will only force prices higher. But there are some very important things we can do immediately to help.

First, we must reassess our foreign policy and announce some changes. One of the reasons we went into Iraq was to secure our oil. Before the Iraq war, oil was less than \$30 a barrel. Today it is over \$70. The sooner we get out of Iraq and allow the Iraqis to solve their own problems the better. Since 2002, oil production in Iraq has dropped 50 percent. Pipeline sabotage and fires are routine, and we have been unable to prevent them. Soaring gasoline prices are a giant, unintended consequence of our invasion, pure and simple.

Second, we must end our obsession for a military confrontation with Iran. Iran does not have a nuclear weapon, and according to our own CIA is not on the verge of obtaining one for years. Iran is not in violation of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, and has a guaranteed right to enrich uranium for energy, in spite of the incessant government and media propaganda to the contrary. Iran has never been sanctioned by the U.N. Security Council, yet the drumbeat grows louder for attacking certain sites in Iran, either by conventional or even by nuclear means. Repeated resolutions by Congress stirs up unnecessary animosity toward Iran, and creates even more concern about future oil supplies from the Middle East.

We must quickly announce we do not seek war with Iran, remove the economic sanctions against her, and accept her offer to negotiate a diplomatic solution to the impacts. An attack on Iran, coupled with our continued presence in Iraq, could hike gas prices to \$5 or \$6 per gallon here at home. By contrast, a sensible approach to Iran could quickly lower oil prices by \$20 a barrel.

Third, we must remember that prices of all things go up because of inflation. Inflation, by definition, is an increase in the money supply. The money supply is controlled by the Federal Reserve and responds to the deficits Congress creates. When deficits are excessive, as they are today, the Fed creates