

TAX RELIEF HELPS OUR ECONOMY

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago, the U.S. Department of Commerce reported that our Nation's real gross domestic product was revised from 4.8 percent up to 5.3 percent. That is the fastest growth of our GDP in 2½ years. That is not the only good news. Our economy has created 5.3 million jobs since May 2003. 75,000 jobs were created last month alone. Unemployment has dropped from 6.3 percent to 4.7 percent, lower than the average of the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Personal income increased at an annual rate of 6.7 percent in April. The Treasury Department is reporting the highest annual tax receipts ever. The Federal budget deficit is \$38 billion lower today than in May 2003. Last month Republicans approved a tax conference agreement that will continue this economic boom, and once again, the Democrats fought to stop it. In fact, if Democrats had their way, we would all face a massive tax hike.

Mr. Speaker, the Republicans will continue to hold the line on spending and extend tax relief for all Americans. We know that these for-growth policies work, and they will continue to foster economic growth.

REFINERY PERMIT PROCESS SCHEDULE ACT

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

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, it is beginning to sound like a broken record around here: another week of record high gas prices, another Republican bill that benefits oil companies without helping consumers. Five years of Republicans' failed energy policies have resulted in Americans paying twice as much at the pump as they did in 2001, while big oil companies make triple the profits.

To distract Americans from this fact, Republicans have put forth the pro-oil company bills like the current Refinery Permit Process Schedule Act which they claim will lower fuel costs for consumers by allowing oil companies to drill more freely. Instead, the bill simply offers yet another needless handout to large oil companies in the form of weakened local regulation where any local public health and environmental concern could be ignored.

Mr. Speaker, instead of taking initiative and moving forward with real solutions to the growing fuel crisis in our country, Republicans offer more of the same. This is just another handout to Big Oil, which is exactly what got us into this mess. Democrats have put forth a real plan for energy independence by 2020. Americans know it is time for a change.

BROADCAST DECENCY

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, the effort to bring real decency standards to our airwaves is taking a major step forward this week. A couple of weeks ago, the Senate passed the Broadcast Decency Enforcement Act ending months of inaction by that body on the issue, and the House had passed its own version earlier last year.

While there are differences between the two bills, they both send a clear message: If you violate decency standards over broadcast airwaves, you will pay a price, a big price. Under current law, fines are limited to \$32,500 per violation. The bill we will vote on today gives the FCC real teeth to enforce decency standards by increasing fines to 10 times that amount. Broadcasters will think twice about airing obscene material if they know it will cost them more than a quarter million dollars to do so.

Mr. Speaker, common decency is under attack in our society. The airwaves often lead the charge. Broadcast decency legislation seeks to do something about that. I applaud my colleagues in the House and Senate for acting on the issue, urge the Members to vote for the bill, send it to the President for his signature, and once again, enforce broadcast decency laws in our country.

□ 1230

NATIONAL WOMEN'S CONFIDENCE DAY

(Mrs. MALONEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the first National Women's Confidence Day. This is a joint effort of YWCA-USA CEO Peggy Sanchez Mills and superstar Queen Latifa, and I am absolutely thrilled that they are able to join us today in the gallery. Thank you so much for coming.

Today and every first Wednesday in June hereafter will be National Women's Confidence Day. This event is a reminder to women everywhere to have self-respect and to empower themselves with confidence every single day, an opportunity for women to get involved in helping other women to live a more confident and fulfilling life and a tribute to women who help other women gain self-confidence and self-esteem.

The goal of National Women's Confidence Day is to raise public awareness and celebrate the positive impact of confidence on women's personal and professional lives. This is one that I support and applaud. I invite everyone to join us in encouraging all women across America to have the confidence to make change.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would remind Members that it is against the rules to introduce guests in the gallery.

HONORING OUR MILITARY MEMBERS

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

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I have just returned from Iraq where I had the privilege of spending Memorial Day with our troops from Florida. I went to Iraq for two reasons: First, to say thank you to our troops for their service; and, second, to see for myself how things were going in Iraq by meeting with our generals, our soldiers, and the Iraqi leaders.

The day I was there was quite hot, 115 degrees, and it was violent. Forty people were killed while I was there, including one U.S. soldier and two CBS news employees. I was so impressed with the bravery of our soldiers. For example, one soldier had his helicopter shot out of the sky. Upon landing, he replaced the blades in the helicopter with brand-new blades and went right back into battle.

Regardless of how you feel about the war in Iraq, realize that our troops are in harm's way, they are performing very bravely, and they deserve our support 100 percent in the U.S. Congress.

TIME FOR A NEW AGENDA IN WASHINGTON

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

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because I feel a great injustice is being done to our Nation. It seems that our Republican colleagues decided to place the concerns of the American people aside so they can continue to divide us. Mr. Speaker, our country needs solutions to problems. Unfortunately, the majority is so out of touch with the average citizens of this Nation, they refuse to see the true important issues. Americans are worried about how they are going to pay for their children's college tuition. That is why we have a plan on helping parents better afford college by doubling the amount they can write off for their children's tuition.

America is worried about how they are going to pay for their high energy bills. That is why we need an energy package that ends our dependence on foreign oil.

These are issues that are important to all our citizens. We need a change from the "no solution" rhetoric of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle. The American citizens are tired of the division of our Nation. We need to unite our Nation and begin to govern not just for the few but for all.

That is what we have been elected to do and that is what we should demand of ourselves. It is time for a new agenda here in Washington, one that focuses on the issues of all Americans, not just the few.

HONORING JAMES P. GREENE

(Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, as we take time to reflect this week on D-Day and World War II, we reflect on the men who proudly fought for the ideals on which our country was founded, freedom and a democratic way of life. On December 7, 1941, our Nation was attacked, the worst attack on American soil until September 11, 2001, and that day our Nation was at war.

Mr. Speaker, a constituent of mine, Mr. James P. Greene from my home county of Oconee County, South Carolina, was aboard the USS *Detroit* in Pearl Harbor on that fateful day. Fortunately, Mr. Greene survived the attack, and I am proud to say he continued on in service to his country, spending the entire war in the Pacific Theater. In fact, Mr. Greene also served in the Korean War, and his entire naval career spanned from 1939 to 1961.

I would like to say to Mr. Greene and countless other World War II veterans just like him listening today, as a veteran who served after you and as an American citizen, thank you. Thank you for your service and thank you for your sacrifice. Our Nation is forever in your debt.

MISGUIDED REPUBLICAN PRIORITIES AND ENERGY

(Ms. SOLIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise because the misguided Republican priorities are hurting the pocketbooks of America's working families. Consumer inflation has risen at a rate of 3.2 percent in just the past 3 months, well above what the Federal Reserve is comfortable with. Gas prices continue to rise over \$3.50 in my district and more. Yet, Republicans have prioritized legislation to benefit wealthy oil companies. These legislative priorities tie the hands of our States and risk public health, all to protect companies which can afford the give their executives \$400 billion retirement packages.

This administration and this body continue to delay real action to help working-class families. I believe that we should increase production of alternative fuels, rescind the billions of dollars in taxpayer subsidies, tax breaks, and royalty relief given to big oil and gas companies, and work toward making America energy independent by the year 2020. America's working families must be our priority, not oil and gas companies.

EXPRESSING UNWAVERING CONFIDENCE FOR UNWAVERING AMERICAN TROOPS

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, every day, U.S. troops risk their lives in Iraq to perform a mission which improves the national security of our country. Their sacrifices are immeasurable and these brave men and women remain dedicated to facing terrorists on the streets of Iraq so that we do not have to face them at home.

Last week, I had the fortunate opportunity to visit Iraq for the sixth time. While visiting with military leaders, Iraqi government officials and U.S. troops, I was inspired to learn of the tremendous progress occurring throughout this new democracy. Iraqi security forces continue to gain greater control over their country. In only 7 months, these forces have expanded from two brigades and 19 battalions to 14 brigades and 57 battalions.

As American troops and Iraqi security forces demonstrate strength on the battlefields of Iraq, we must also demonstrate our unwavering confidence in their mission for victory in the global war on terrorism.

In conclusion, God bless our troops and we will never forget September 11.

ON THE REFINERY PERMIT PROCESS SCHEDULE ACT

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

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, American families are facing record-breaking prices at the gas pump this summer. But apparently, the priority of Republicans in Congress is to keep providing giveaways to wealthy oil companies.

This week, Republican leaders are bringing another unnecessary piece of legislation to the House floor in an effort to make it seem like they're meeting the challenge of high fuel prices. As most of us know, however, appearances can be deceiving.

Let's be clear about what this Republican refinery bill won't do. Just like the Republican push to drill for oil in Alaska, today's refinery bill won't take one penny off high gas prices. Not one penny.

Let's also be clear about what this Republican refinery bill will do. Quite simply, it gives rich oil companies free real estate to build refineries.

And what if the free land happens to be in your backyard? What if a refinery violates local environmental concerns? What if your neighborhood objects to having a refinery in your backyard? According to this bill, well, you're just on your own.

If you care anything about alternative energy development, State and

local rights, the environment, or American families, vote "no" on this misguided bill.

RAPE TREES

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

Mr. POE. Ripped from the bodies of unwilling women, undergarments cling to branches of a tree just a few feet from the lawless U.S.-Mexico border. Dozens of pairs of underwear thrown there by rapists.

These are called rape trees. Each pair is a trophy from a woman that was smuggled into the United States. Victims that are heard screaming in the desert. They are raped, even gang raped by illegal human smugglers, then forced into silence.

These trees are a warning. Illegal immigrants evade our borders but crime doesn't evade them. Some become criminals. Some become victims. They are raped, robbed and murdered by other illegals. Human smugglers and brutal criminals who then claim other victims.

More than 70 percent of their rapes, murders and child sex crimes are against Americans. One expert who studies sex crimes says about a hundred illegal sex offenders cross the border every day, leaving thousands of victims every year.

Rape trees are a warning to illegals not to talk. They should be a warning to Americans as well: to shout out against illegal entry and human smuggling.

And that's just the way it is.

GOP DO-NOTHING CONGRESS REFUSES TO LEAD

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

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, the do-nothing Republican Congress continues to move along at a snail's pace, refusing to address any of the tough decisions that Americans so desperately want this Congress to tackle. Today is the 160th day of the year, but only the 40th voting day here in the House. Imagine that. It is no wonder that the American people have lost faith in Washington.

The House Republican leadership has simply run out of ideas. Rather than proposing a forward-looking energy initiative, House Republicans continue to push Big Oil's tired old ideas, ideas that will do absolutely nothing to lower gas prices for the American consumer.

Rather than explore ways to help Americans better afford ever-increasing health care premiums, House Republicans will once again follow the playbook of the insurance industry when, later this month, they will propose health care bills that only help enrich insurance companies.

Mr. Speaker, time is running out for the House Republican do-nothing Congress to actually provide some real