

MAKING AMERICA ENERGY
INDEPENDENT

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, all of us are interested in moving this country forward on a defined energy policy. And we had, just an hour ago, an open debate on how we could move America forward. I'm delighted that part of the effort in the legislation just passed by this House emphasized new CAFE standards so that there can be greater mileage on vehicles that Americans may purchase, and, yes, a lowering of the cost of gasoline, but also a lowering of the utilization of gas by getting greater mileage; compromise between the energy industry and, of course, those who make automobiles in Detroit.

In addition are the emphasis on alternative fuels, the research to help us expand greening of America and the emphasis on creating new jobs and looking at alternative fuels. But I also believe that we must focus on the existence of fossil fuels, oil and gas, and be able to develop oil and gas domestically, particularly, in the gulf region. And so I hope that we will expand that debate as we go forward in making America independent as relates to energy.

AMT DISASTER

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, have you seen the news? Democrat inaction on the alternative minimum tax is leading to a delay of tax refunds for millions of hardworking Americans. The carelessness of this new majority is poised again to strike the American people, this time in their wallet.

This AMT problem's been known for months. Yet we still have no action in this Congress.

The average tax refund last year was more than \$2,000, \$2,000, Mr. Speaker. That's a mortgage payment. That's college tuition. That's a holiday credit card bill.

While the new majority has made clear that, in good faith, they support policies to raise taxes, this expensive predicament with the AMT is simply the result of congressional negligence. Now, the American people expect more than this from Congress. They want less partisanship and more leadership.

Mr. Speaker, let's act now to ensure the American people are not forced to pick up the tab for the carelessness of this majority. Let's put politics aside and put hardworking taxpayers first.

THE ENERGY BILL

(Mr. MICA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, my colleagues, not only will the Americans receive a great surprise with a tax increase with the so-called energy bill that was just passed by the House of Representatives, and higher fuel costs; I want to announce, as the Republican leader on the Transportation Committee, you've also depleted the highway trust fund by some \$2.1 billion in this measure.

The Congressional Budget Office is already predicting a \$5 billion deficit in the highway trust fund by 2009.

Now, my friends in Congress, we can't keep this game up. Unfortunately, in the full year 2007 appropriations resolution that passed the House, we knocked another \$3.47 billion and rescinded that from the highway trust fund, and another \$3 billion recession from the highway program in the 2008 bill that passed the House recently.

Unfortunately, the game being played with our Nation's highway trust fund has consequences, and we will pay.

□ 1615

THE "ANTI-ENERGY" BILL

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, back on January 22, I got up here at this very spot because we had passed a bill that week that was going to force the price of gasoline to skyrocket upward. A year later it's up a dollar. Today we passed another anti-energy bill.

You know, there are a number of States in this country who just say we want to use all the energy but we don't want to produce any. So there are States like Texas, Louisiana, a number of States, we're cranking out all the energy we can to help the Nation. This bill we passed today not only says we have got lots of energy we're not going to let anybody produce, but we are going to penalize the States that have been more than team players and we are going to force the price of gasoline higher and higher.

So I hope my colleagues across the aisle, as gas goes up towards \$5, will also come to the floor and say, "That's right, it's \$5 a gallon, and we are proud of it. We did that for you; so you can thank us."

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CLAY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

CELEBRATING PASTOR ALFRED
VAUGHN'S 50 YEARS IN THE MIN-
ISTRY

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

tleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great admiration and respect to recognize a dear friend and one of the Nation's most distinguished citizens, Dr. Alfred C.D. Vaughn, for his 50 years of service to God as a preacher, teacher, leader, and friend.

For the last 21 years, Dr. Vaughn has been the cherished pastor of the Sharon Baptist Church, located in my hometown of Baltimore, Maryland. As grace would have it, this is the same church that his grandmother joined in 1894 and of which his mother became a member in 1911.

Dr. Vaughn, known as the dean of ministers in Baltimore, is one of thirteen children of Mildred and Robert Vaughn. He received Christ at the tender age of 11. Just 8 years later, he was licensed to preach and began a glorious journey of teaching and preaching God's Holy Word.

He first served as pastor of Promise Land Baptist Church in Moneta, Virginia. For 18 years he then led the congregation of Grace Memorial Baptist Church in Baltimore before accepting the calling in 1986 to return home as the visionary pastor of the Sharon Baptist Church.

Throughout his career as a minister, the pursuit of a quality education has always been his priority. Dr. Vaughn earned an AB-BD degree from Virginia Seminary and College, a master of divinity degree and a doctor of ministry degree from Southern University, and he has been awarded four honorary degrees.

It has been said that "you show people who you are by what you do." Throughout his entire life, Dr. Vaughn has demonstrated to the world, with sincere humility and steadfast determination, his commitment to helping others to be the very best that they can be.

Recognizing the need for accessible child care in his community, Dr. Vaughn converted a building near Sharon Baptist Church into a family support center that houses a child care facility and operates other community service programs. He also spearheaded efforts to raise thousands of dollars to send students to college, adopt a local elementary school, and provide after-school programs, local food pantry programs and foreign missions.

However, Dr. Vaughn's accomplishments and achievements reach far beyond the walls of his church. He served as commissioner for the Housing Authority of Baltimore City for 10 years. He was appointed as trustee and as treasurer of Provident Hospital and as trustee of the Community College of Baltimore. He served on the board of directors of the Afro-American Newspapers, and he currently serves as chairman of the board of trustees of Eastern Theological Seminary.

As a testament to his leadership, Dr. Vaughn was recently elected, for an unprecedented eighth time, to serve as

president of the Baptist Ministers Conference of Baltimore and Vicinity, an organization which represents some 250,000 congregants.

Outside of serving the Lord and leading souls to His kingdom, Pastor Vaughn's greatest joy comes from his family. He has been blessed with 44 years of blissful marriage to his wife, Lillian. They have three children, Corrogan Vaughn, Lynnette Vaughn, and Cassandra Vaughn-Fox; a son-in-law, Larry Fox, Jr.; and three wonderful grandchildren.

Whenever I see Pastor Vaughn in the community, his grandchildren are not far behind. No matter what his daily commitments may be, he picks them up from school every day and spends quality time with them, sharing his wisdom and his love.

Baltimore is truly blessed to be able to call a stalwart such as Dr. Alfred C.D. Vaughn one of our very own. As a son of two preachers, I can say with certainty that it is fitting to give God praise for this dynamic leader. For 50 years he has preached the Gospel with truth and honor, not to glorify himself but to save souls and make others' lives better. He is the kind of man who, just by his presence, makes us want to stand taller and reach for the very best that is within us. As my father once said, he is a man whose presence is presence enough.

I am honored that God allowed our lives to eclipse. And today I thank Pastor Vaughn on behalf of Baltimore and our entire Nation for his dedication, commitment to God and his church and his community.

THE FIRST AMENDMENT— RELIGION

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the first amendment is first in our Bill of Rights because the provisions in it are the most important. Without those provisions the rest of the Bill of Rights are meaningless.

The first amendment states in part that "Congress," that's us, "shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

This amendment, like many others, was a reaction to colonial life under King George III. The Church of England was the official Church of England and some of the colonies. The Framers hoped to protect the exercise of any religion by prohibiting the establishment of a national religion. A national religion like the Church of England was supported by taxation. Attendance at services was even mandatory. No marriage or baptism outside of the Church was sanctioned. There were civil and even criminal penalties for members of religious minorities.

So the U.S. Constitution's framework made it possible for all religious groups

to gain legal protection. The freedom to practice one's own religion is the reason why the colonists settled and founded this great country. That is the primary reason why people left England, to seek religious freedom.

The Founding Fathers did not believe that government and religion had to be entirely separate, however. The first President, George Washington, said in his first inaugural address, declared as his "first official act" his "fervent supplications to that Almighty Being who rules over the universe" and that this Almighty Being "might bless this new government."

President Washington also echoed this religious attitude in his farewell address in 1796 when he said, "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports."

When our Constitution was drafted, the elderly statesman Benjamin Franklin said that if the Good Lord is concerned about a sparrow that falls from the trees, He certainly would be concerned about a new Nation at its birth, and he encouraged Congress to go in prayer. And Congress did so that morning and prayed, and ever since then our Congress starts each morning with a prayer.

The first Congress recognized the importance of religion in government when it enacted the Northwest Ordinance in 1787, and it begins: "Religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged."

The first amendment includes the free exercise clause. Like the establishment clause, the framers included the free exercise clause to protect religious minorities from persecution. The establishment clause prohibits government creation of, support, or endorsement of a national religion. And the free exercise clause protects individual religious beliefs and practices from government interference.

The significance of the free exercise of religion clause is that it affirms the value of religion in American culture and even promotes public display of religion.

Many Americans believe that the first amendment created a separation between church and state, but those words do not exist anywhere in the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, nor the Declaration of Independence.

These words came from a letter written by Thomas Jefferson in 1801 to the Danbury Baptist Association, who was concerned about the Congregationalist Church becoming the national religion, and that is why Jefferson made the comment to the Danbury Baptist Association that there is a separation between church and state. These words do not promote a prohibition by government against religion in the public sector.

Billy Graham once said that "The Framers of our Constitution meant we

were to have freedom of religion, not freedom from religion." But antireligious radicals are on the offensive, trying to make the United States free from religion. These radicals want the United States to be a secular government like France. But that's not what our Founding Fathers intended when they created our country.

When Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, he proclaimed that God gives us all of our rights. He wrote that "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights."

Jefferson's reference to God is echoed throughout this Nation. Our currency mentions God. Our government buildings have religious scenes and words etched into them. We pledge allegiance to the Nation under God. We even have the great lawgiver Moses on the far wall looking directly down on the Speaker's chair.

So, Mr. Speaker, the mention of God in our culture is not an establishment of religion. It's a fact that this Nation was founded on religious beliefs and religious values. That is an historical fact.

And that's just the way it is.

□ 1630

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

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

PAULETTE MARIE McFARLAND

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

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, we have lost Paulette Marie McFarland, 58, who was a trailblazer, an innovator in early childhood development, dying of pancreatic cancer on Tuesday, October 23, 2007, at her home in Chatsworth, California.

She was born Paulette Marie Mahan in Bluefield, West Virginia, on August 12, 1949. She received her bachelor's in early childhood education from Hampton University in Newport News, Virginia, and her master's in education from Mount St. Mary's College in Los Angeles, California.

Paulette taught in the Los Angeles Unified School System for 30 years and spent the majority of her tenure at Van Nuys Elementary. She received many accolades during her career, which included Teacher of the Year for her school region. Paulette served as a Master Teacher for student teachers for Cal State University, Northridge and University of California, Los Angeles. She participated in the Bilingual Teacher Classroom Program and reviewed the latest research in education