

pace. Iraqis spend 16 of every 24 hours without electricity.

Rather than sending additional troops to combat the insurgency, we should begin to responsibly redeploy our forces in Iraq while redoubling our efforts to train and equip Iraqi forces to provide their own security, an effort which is at the very heart of the Iraq Study Group recommendations for bolstering security in Iraq.

President Bush rightly characterized the most recent pushes to stabilize Baghdad, Operation Together Forward and Operation Together Forward II, as unsuccessful, because there were not enough Iraqi forces to hold areas cleared by American troops. But the President's assertion that we will now be able to rely on 18 Iraqi army and police brigades to shoulder much of the burden in a new offensive in Baghdad is clearly at odds with reality.

□ 1600

The Iraqi Army has not distinguished itself in combat. And four of the six battalions that were deployed to the capital last summer failed to show up at all.

The Iraqi police, which are under the control of the Ministry of the Interior, have been heavily infiltrated by Shiite militias and death squads and cannot be expected to take on Shiite extremists as Prime Minister Malaki has pledged. There is little support for an escalated American military presence in Iraq. American military commanders do not see an increase as improving the security situation on the ground, and the strain of multiple deployments has seriously eroded our capacity to respond to other contingencies should the need arise.

The American people, Democrats and Republicans alike, do not support an increase in the troop strength in Iraq. Perhaps most important of all, the Iraqis do not want more American troops in Iraq. In fact, if there is one thing that unites Iraqis, it is the desire that American forces should not remain indefinitely.

Furthermore, by continuing to bear the brunt of the fighting against insurgents, foreign fighters, and militias, the United States has fostered a dangerous dependence that has slowed efforts to have Iraqis shoulder the burden of defending their own country and government.

Even as we focus our military efforts on training Iraqi security forces, we need to push the Sunnis and Shiites to make the political compromises that are the necessary precondition to any reconciliation process. I have been arguing for more than 2 years that the struggle in Iraq is primarily a political one. The Iraq Study Group and numerous outside experts have also pressed the administration to force the Iraqi Government to make the hard decisions on power sharing, minority rights, and the equitable distribution of oil revenues that could help quell the Sunni insurgency and undermine

support for Shiite maximalists like Muktdada al Sadr.

I also believe the United States must work to convene a regional conference to support Iraq's bringing together its neighborhoods to find ways to stem the flow of weapons and foreign fighters into Iraq and to pursue common strategies in support of reconstruction and political reconciliation efforts.

There is hard evidence that Iran is facilitating the flow of weapons, trainers, and intelligence to Shiite militias in a bid to assert greater control over its neighbor. At the same time, the long and porous Syrian border has continued to be a transit point for foreign jihadis who have carried out some of the spectacular and devastating attacks on U.S. troops and Iraqi civilians.

Finally, our efforts in Iraq cannot be pursued in a vacuum. We need to do more to engage the Arab and Muslim world, and there must be a renewed effort to start peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. This week's passage of the 9/11 implementation bill included excellent proposals for buttressing our leadership by improving our communication of ideas and communication in the Muslim world and by expanding U.S. scholarship exchange and other programs in Muslim countries.

Mr. Speaker, failure is unacceptable, but so is staying the course. I hope and expect that the debate we are going to have, the first real debate we have had in years, will convince the President to listen to those who are calling for a new way forward and not more of the same.

A TRIBUTE TO ROBERT ADERHOLT

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

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to congratulate, pay tribute, and honor a great jurist who has served on the bench for over 40 years in his home State of Alabama.

Born on December 6, 1935, to Ruby and Jesse Clifton, he grew up in Winston County, Alabama, and graduated from Haleyville High School in 1954. He pursued his undergraduate degree at Birmingham-Southern College. Thereafter, he attended the Cumberland School of Law in Lebanon, Tennessee, and obtained his law degree from the University of Alabama School of Law.

As a young attorney, he joined the faculty at the Cumberland School of Law, which by that time had moved from Lebanon, Tennessee, to Birmingham, Alabama, which is known today as Samford University. It was during this time that he authored, along with Professor Sam B. Gilreath, Caruther's "History of a Lawsuit," eighth edition.

In 1958, he married his high school sweetheart, Mary Frances Brown, and they have been married for over 48

years. They have one son, who is married to the former Caroline McDonald and, two grandchildren, Mary Elliott and Robert Hayes.

In 1962, he began serving as judge of the Court of Law and Equity in Winston County and served there until 1973. Then in 1977, he took office as one of two judges serving the 25th Judicial Circuit in the Alabama court system and has remained on the bench for 30 years.

He has served the public for more than 40 years and has presided over each case that has come before him with integrity and with impartiality. He is someone who has a brilliant legal mind; but most important, he has compassion for all individuals, regardless of their background or their social standing.

He is a man of faith, prayer, and integrity, who has a great love for his family, his country and his God. He has taken his job seriously from the first day he stepped up to the bench to preside. In addition to his responsibilities on the bench, he has been a businessman and has pastored Fairview Congregational Church in Hackleburg, Alabama, for over 40 years.

Mr. Speaker, I know all these things to be true about this individual and his character and his reputation because I personally observed him. Many times Members don't always have that kind of perspective when they come to the floor. I can say these things in all truthfulness as I stand here on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives because this man, the judge I am talking about, Bobby Aderholt, is my dad.

GAS PRICES

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

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend the new Democratic Congress which will finally address high energy prices.

Many Americans have a hard time understanding what often seems like arbitrary reasons for fluctuations in gas prices. As the chairman of the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, I look forward to bringing transparency to the oil and gas markets to clarify their effect on gas prices.

A recent example of confusing market behavior was in September and October of 2006, just before the November elections. Gas prices dropped an average of 60 cents per gallon. This 60-cent drop in gas prices occurred despite the fact that there were pipeline disruptions in Alaska and indications that OPEC would cut oil production.

While gas prices dropped 60 cents a gallon in September and October, crude prices only dropped 10 cents. For years, the American Petroleum Institute, API, the oil companies' main lobbying group, spent millions of dollars on public relations campaigns convincing the

American people that big oil companies are victims of international crude oil prices and have little to say in the final price of gasoline.

API insists a price of a gallon of gas is directly related to the price of a barrel of crude oil. Yet before the election we have a 60-cent per gallon drop in gas prices and only a 10 percent drop in the price of crude.

Consumer advocates have accused oil companies of purposely reducing gas prices in the months before the election to help Republican candidates. Earlier this month, National Public Radio featured a representative from the Foundation for Taxpayer and Consumer Rights who argued oil companies intentionally reduced the price of gas to influence the November elections.

After the elections, gas prices have increased an average of 15 cents a gallon. Oil companies were able to significantly reduce the price of gas in September-October, then increase the price right after the election, without a corresponding change in the price of crude oil.

This is not the first time oil companies have been accused of manipulating gas prices. Internal memos from several oil companies written in the 1990s have revealed that big oil companies limit refinery capacity in the United States to control the supply, cost, and price of gasoline.

After Hurricane Katrina, the government found that refiners, wholesalers, and retailers charged significantly higher prices that were not the result of either increased costs or market trends. However, because there is no Federal energy price-gouging law in place, the Federal Trade Commission cannot even prosecute this price-gouging practice.

For too long, oil companies have benefited from tax breaks, government subsidies, and lack of oversight. At the same time, oil companies have made record profits at the expense of the American people. Next week, the U.S. House of Representatives will consider legislation to end the tax breaks and special subsidies for Big Oil.

Rather than helping the oil companies' bottom line, these tax breaks and subsidies will be reallocated to promote alternative energy sources to end our Nation's addiction to oil.

Later this year, I look forward to having an open and honest debate on my legislation to create a Federal law against price gouging for gasoline, natural gas, propane, and other fuel. I will continue to work towards greater oversight for oil and gas trading, especially off-market trades, known as OTC trades.

I will be reintroducing my legislation, the Prevent Unfair Manipulation of Prices Act, to improve oversight of oil trades and strengthen penalties for traders who attempt to illegally manipulate these markets.

Under the Republican leadership, the oil companies enjoyed record profits

while Americans suffered with record high gas prices, minimal oversight, and price manipulation. The American people have now chosen a new direction, electing Democrat majorities in both the House and the Senate.

I look forward to being able to address high energy prices, to stop price gouging, market manipulation, and to stand up for the American consumer.

SALUTE TO STEELERS' ALL PRO RUNNING BACK AND LEGENDARY COACH DICK HOAK

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

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the great contribution Coach Dick Hoak has made to professional athletics, the game of football, the Pittsburgh Steelers, and the people of western Pennsylvania.

Coach Dick Hoak recently announced his retirement from the Steelers' organization on January 1 of this year. As he ends an impressive career, Dick Hoak can look back on his 45 years of history as part of the Steelers' organization. This is an unprecedented run and a shining example of consistency in a business best known for its instability rather than longevity with one team.

The first 10 of Dick Hoak's 45-year tenure with the Steelers were not spent on the sidelines but, instead, on the playing field. Dick Hoak was drafted by the Steelers in 1961, after an impressive high school career in football, basketball, and baseball that included a WPIAL football championship, and a single-game scoring record of 39 points and playing 4 years for Joe Paterno's Penn State Nittany Lions, where he led the team to a Liberty Bowl victory and was named the MVP.

Throughout his playing career with the Steelers, Dick Hoak time and time again showed he was a talented athlete and a dedicated teammate. He led his team in rushing three times and today is the fifth ranked rusher in Steeler history, with 3,965 yards rushing. Dick Hoak also accumulated an impressive 146 receptions, 33 touchdowns, and a Pro Bowl appearance.

For many players, the culmination of such an impressive record would have been enough on which to end a career. However, Dick Hoak, his commitment to Pittsburgh and the Steelers would not end there. Only one year after retiring from the National Football League, Dick Hoak turned down an assistant coaching job at the University of Pittsburgh and rejoined the Steelers' organization, this time as an assistant coach under Hall of Fame Coach Chuck Noll. During this time, Coach Hoak coached the running backs, including the great Franco Harris, through four Super Bowl victories, a championship legacy he would later recapture under Coach Bill Cowher.

Under Dick Hoak's leadership as an assistant coach, the Steelers domi-

nated the league in rushing yardage. Over the 15 seasons Dick Hoak coached for Bill Cowher alone, the Steelers rushed for over 30,000 yards and led the league in rushing three of those 15 seasons. His excellent coaching also added in no small part to the Steelers' Super Bowl win last year. The Super Bowl win not only capped Dick Hoak's career; it made Hoak one of three people in the Steelers' organization, and possibly the only coach in NFL history, to have six Super Bowl appearances and five Super Bowl rings with one NFL team.

Throughout his accomplished career in football, Dick Hoak never let Pennsylvania out of his thoughts. Of course, over his long career, Coach Hoak was offered positions away from his home State. However, his commitment to create a stable environment for his family, and his undying loyalty to his team and the owners of the Steelers, the Rooney family, kept him in Pennsylvania. He never left to accept an offensive coordinator's job with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers; he never left the Rooney family to coach the USFL's Pittsburgh Maulers. Coach Hoak put his family first and remained devoted, loyal, and committed to his team in western Pennsylvania.

Coach Hoak was born in Jeanette, Pennsylvania, and continues to live in nearby Greensburg in a house he has owned since his early days in coaching. His commitment to the Pittsburgh Steelers gave his family stability and western Pennsylvania a steady hand at the helm of a winning offense. Now that his storied career with the Steelers is behind him, Dick Hoak can look forward to another winning team: his family. I know his wife, Lynn, his children Kelly, Katie and Rich, and his seven grandchildren, including my nephews Michael, Jonathan, and Daniel Shuster, are happy to have more time with their Pap-Pap.

Dick Hoak represents the best attributes of sportsmanship, hard work, and commitment. Those are the values that translate from the football field to everyday life, and he embodied them with class. Not only that, Dick Hoak represents the American Dream. He is an American success story who shows if you work hard enough and remain dedicated to your goals, you can succeed beyond what you thought possible, into excellence and legend.

I am happy to say congratulations on a great career, and thank you for being there when we needed you, Coach Hoak.

□ 1615

IN SUPPORT OF EMBRYONIC STEM CELL RESEARCH

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WELCH of Vermont). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CARNAHAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, today was a remarkable day in this new 110th