

prices have increased more than \$1 per gallon since the majority party, under Speaker PELOSI, took control of the House last year, increasing from a nationwide average of \$2.33 per gallon on the first day of the 110th Congress to now \$3.34 a gallon. When Speaker PELOSI took office and had a plan to fix the energy cost, oil was selling for \$56 a barrel. Now, it's selling for \$113 a barrel. People are looking for hope and change.

Figures from the Energy Information Administration indicate the U.S. reliance on the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, commonly known as OPEC, grew from 50.9 percent of our total crude imports in 2006 to 57.6 percent in 2007. Not only has the majority party failed to end our reliance on Middle Eastern oil for our essential energy needs, they've actually helped grow our dependence to historic and dangerous levels.

We need to make sure that we're not dependent on our energy needs from people that hate us and hate our freedoms all because of their refusal to allow responsible energy production here at home. We cannot tax and regulate our way out of an energy crisis. The American people want an energy policy that's comprehensive and addresses our needs for wind, water, solar, safe nuclear, clean coal technology and, most importantly, the use of American oil.

The American middle class deserves better. They deserve an energy policy that is dependent on American energy, not foreign energy.

CRISIS IN LEADERSHIP IN WASHINGTON AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, today is April 15th. It's a momentous day for Americans as all Americans know it's Tax Day. And it's a day that Americans tend to focus a little more attention on the amount of money that they send to Washington. And it's a lot of money. It's a lot of money, Mr. Speaker.

And most folks that I talk to say that would be okay, a lot of them have said that would be okay if they were getting good things for their money, if they were seeing progress happen here in Washington. But that's just not the case.

I, like most of my colleagues, go home every weekend. I went home last weekend, and what I hear from my constituents is what is happening? Where is the leadership in Washington? Mr. Speaker, I believe there is a crisis in leadership in Washington and here in the House of Representatives.

Whether it is supporting our troops, the leadership here apparently is determined that they are going to use our military troops as pack mules to carry

their special projects across the finish line. Mr. Speaker, that's leadership lacking.

Whether it's protecting our Nation in the area of intelligence, this leadership believes that our intelligence community doesn't need to have the tools necessary to tell what the bad guys are going to do before they do it. Mr. Speaker, that's leadership lacking.

You have heard a lot about gas prices this morning. Sixteen months ago when this leadership took charge, a barrel of gasoline cost about \$52, \$53 a barrel. Today, it is about \$112, \$113 a barrel. Mr. Speaker, that's leadership lacking.

What's changed in Washington since that time? New leadership here in the House of Representatives. Mr. Speaker, that's not the kind of change that America voted for.

We need to work together in the area of energy. We need to make certain that we, as Americans, conserve more. We need to make certain that we utilize American resources for Americans. There's incredible resources in our land. We could utilize those resources in environmentally sensitive and technologically sound ways to make certain that we decrease our dependence on foreign oil.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, we need to make certain that we accelerate the use of alternative fuel, not picking winners and losers like this leadership in this majority wants to do, pick ethanol and raise the gas prices significantly by that, raise food prices around the world because of the action of this leadership. Mr. Speaker, that's leadership lacking.

Where else is leadership lacking here in the House? Well, Mr. Speaker, it is in helping our friends around the world. We have a former President meeting with Hamas terrorists. Where is the outcry from this leadership saying that that's not the correct thing to do for a former leader of our Nation?

In the area of fair trade, free trade, last week this leadership decided they were going to take one of our friends, Colombia and South America, who have worked with us time and time again, one of the glimmering hopes for democracy in South America, and what does this leadership do? Kick them in the teeth.

It is not just me saying that. Headlines all across the Nation last week: Financial Times, "A setback on trade in Washington;" Knoxville News Sentinel, "House Democrats holding free trade hostage;" Corpus Christi Caller Times, "Congress should pass Colombia trade deal;" Charleston Post Courier, "Politics trump free trade;" Orange County Register, "Trading on ignorance;" the Plain Dealer, "Sidetracking American trade deal hurts U.S. businesses and workers;" the Chicago Tribune, "Caving on Colombia;" Los Angeles Times, "Pelosi plays politics;" The Oklahoman, "Pelosi's ploy: Colombia Deal Succumbs to Politics;" New York Times,

"Time for the Colombian Free Trade Pact;" the Denver Post, "Historical failure on Colombia trade pact;" San Francisco Chronicle, "Trade pandering;" New York Post, "Pelosi's Putrid Sellout;" Seattle Times, "The Washington 6: tampering with trade;" the Boston Herald, "The Pelosi Doctrine: Duck;" Las Vegas Review Journal, "Trade Talks;" National Review, "Free Choice;" St. Louis Post-Dispatch, "The Politics of Trade;" Washington Post, "Drop Dead, Colombia;" and the Wall Street Journal, "Pelosi's Bad Faith."

Mr. Speaker, there is a crisis of leadership here in Washington, here in this House of Representatives. The American people are paying attention. The American people want positive change. The American people want us to work together. I call on the Speaker of this House to bring forward the free trade deal with Colombia, to work together on gas prices, to make certain that we pass a Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act that allows our intelligence communities to act positively.

Mr. Speaker, I call on our leadership to be responsible.

ETHANOL HAS NOT SAVED US YET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It has been said by folks that Washington, DC., is the only place in America that is surrounded by reality because people here, especially in Congress, those people say, are in a Disney World atmosphere and don't know how the world really is.

Probably the best example is what has taken place throughout our country in the area of gasoline prices. They are going up every day. Every day we come back to Congress, gasoline prices continue to rise. And there's a constant problem here. Retail operators who run those mom-and-pop independent gasoline stations are saying they're not even making a profit off of gasoline. They hope maybe they can make one cent a gallon. The way they make profit is selling lottery tickets and donuts, and the country continues to see higher and higher gasoline prices.

It's a tremendous problem that we have to deal with. We have to come out of this Disney World atmosphere and solve the problem. Some say what is going to save us all is ethanol. Let's take all of the farmland in America, let's till it up, let's grow some corn, and let's make some of that unproven, unpredictable ethanol to burn in our vehicles.

Of course, what we have done as a Nation by encouraging and subsidizing the special interest group of ethanol, we've raised the corn prices worldwide. In fact, they have tripled in the last 2 years. And because corn prices are going up, wheat prices are going up. And in the last 17 years, food prices in

the world are higher than they ever have been, all because the United States has seen this vision that ethanol is going to save us all.

Several years ago, those who talked about ethanol that weren't for the concept of ethanol said ethanol is not going to be profitable unless gasoline gets to \$4 a gallon. Four years ago, people in this House said, oh, that's never going to happen. The problem with ethanol is it takes a gallon and a third of fuel, diesel, to produce a gallon of ethanol. And only when gasoline gets to be \$4 a gallon will ethanol be profitable for this country.

In fact, it's driving up pollution. Science Magazine has stated, "After taking into account worldwide land-use changes, corn-based ethanol will increase greenhouse gases 93 percent compared to gasoline over a 30-year period."

In other words, the House was trying to be environmentally correct. We want to make sure we don't have pollution. Nobody wants pollution. Nobody wants greenhouse gases; but unproven, subsidized ethanol is going to raise worldwide greenhouse gases all because we're tilling up our farmland.

I have here a map of the United States. Now we're also finding out where the Mississippi River dumps into the Gulf of Mexico, there is a dead zone, and there is a dead zone there for various reasons. But because we're plowing up all in the Midwest this farmland and making corn, which takes a lot of fertilizer, that fertilizer is going down the Mississippi River, and the dead zone at the mouth of the Mississippi River is getting bigger. "Dead zone" means exactly what it says: Nothing grows there and fish don't live there, all because of this concept of ethanol.

So what are we doing about it? Well, first thing Congress did, we're going to punish those oil companies, those American oil companies, and we are going to tax them, raise the taxes on these oil companies, and that's what Congress did. Now it's a simple economic fact. You tax something, you get less of it. What does that mean? That means if you tax something, you're going to get less production. You're going to get less production of crude oil.

Now, we don't drill off our own shores. We're the only Nation in the world that doesn't take care of ourselves with the natural resources that we have been given. The only place we drill offshore, Mr. Speaker, is right here in this blue zone off the State of Texas where I'm from, off the State of Louisiana and parts of Mississippi and Alabama. But you see in all of these areas that are red on this map, there is crude oil out there in the ocean, but we don't drill out there even though crude oil is there.

In fact, we're going to see some new platforms out in the Gulf of Mexico, but they're not from America. Right here off the coast of Florida, right

there at the tip, there is an oil site, but we're not drilling there because we don't drill offshore. So the next oil rig you will see out in the Gulf of Mexico will be built by the Cubans and the Chinese. They're drilling in areas that we ought to be drilling in because it has been said in this House we can't drill offshore safely. That is wrong.

I live in the area that was hit by Katrina and Hurricane Rita, and when those two hurricanes came through that area, 700 offshore rigs were damaged or destroyed. But yet, we didn't hear one word about crude oil seepage from the Gulf of Mexico because it did not happen.

We have the greatest technology in the world for drilling, and we can drill safely, we've proven that. We've drilled safely, and we will continue to drill safely.

And that's just the way it is.

ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS ARE DRIVING UP THE PRICE OF GASOLINE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, oil prices have reached \$112, \$113 a barrel, an all-time high. Gas prices have reached an average of \$3.50 a gallon and in some places even higher, and the only people who seem to be happy about this are Sierra Club and some of these other environmental groups. I have noticed that almost all of these environmental radicals or environmental extremists seem to come from very wealthy or very upper-income families. They are elitist types, and perhaps they're not concerned when their policies destroy jobs and drive up prices because who they're really hurting are the poor and the lower income and the working people in this country.

As the previous speaker, Mr. POE, pointed out, now some of these environmental groups, their policies are causing food prices to go up worldwide and, in many countries, leading to starvation. But once again, the environmentalists are hurting the poor and the lower-income and the working people. So perhaps they don't care.

About a year and a half ago in one of my newsletters I wrote this: I said, many experts are still predicting that the price of oil, and thus the price of gas, is going to go way back up. Environmental groups think this is good because it will force people to drive less. However, many people already have difficulty paying their gas bills, especially people from small towns in rural areas where many people have to drive long distances to go to work.

And I might add, Mr. Speaker, that when you drive these gas prices up, as some of these environmental groups want, to \$4, or \$5, or \$6 a gallon so people will drive less, you'll put the final nails in the coffins of some of the small towns in rural areas. The environmental groups loudly complain about

urban sprawl, but yet their policies are leading to more urban sprawl as they continue to drive up these gas prices.

Syndicated columnist Walter Williams wrote recently, "If I were an OPEC big cheese, I would easily conclude I could restrict output and charge higher prices were U.S. oil drilling restricted. I would see environmental groups as allies and make 'charitable' contributions to help them reduce U.S. output," and that's something I thought for quite some time that these OPEC and countries and foreign energy producers I'm sure are contributing big money to these environmental groups, and they're receiving huge multi-million dollar contributions that they were refusing to disclose the source of.

Leonardo Mangeri, of the Italian energy company ENI, said, there are proven oil reserves now, economically and technologically recoverable, of 1.1 trillion barrels, or 38 years of world usage. In addition, he says there are another 2 trillion barrels of recoverable reserves that will be obtainable as technology improves over the next few years.

Also, the International Energy Administration, Mr. Speaker, estimates that at current prices, it will be economic to recover at least another 2 trillion barrels of petroleum from tar sands and oil shale.

Just a couple of months ago, I wrote in another newsletter this: Gas prices are far too high and probably will go even higher. They could be much lower, but very powerful environmental groups want them to go higher so people will drive less. Thus, we have put 85 percent or 611 million acres of the outer continental shelf off limits to oil production. We will not allow drilling in 99.9 percent of Alaska where oil could be found, and have prohibited or restricted production in other parts of the U.S.

We've also placed so many rules, regulations and red tape on all types of domestic energy production that small- and medium-sized businesses cannot compete or even enter these industries in the first place. All of these productions can be done in environmentally safe ways. Some of these environmental groups help the big business giants and foreign energy producers tremendously, but they are really hurting lower- and middle-income people.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 7 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. BALDWIN) at noon.