



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 110th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 154

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, APRIL 29, 2008

No. 69

House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LARSEN of Washington).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
April 29, 2008.

I hereby appoint the Honorable RICK LARSEN to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

FEDERAL GAS TAX HOLIDAY A BAD IDEA

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

During this election season, we've seen some pretty painful moments. It has been embarrassing, for instance, to watch the flip-flopping of Senator MCCAIN on tax cuts that he is now for before he was against them. But there is no idea that is as bad as his most recent suggestion that we just have a gas tax holiday, to suspend the 18.4 cent per gallon Federal gas tax from Memorial Day through Labor Day.

This is a really unfortunate suggestion. It's unfortunate to me that Senator CLINTON appears to be embracing it. I would hope that Senator CLINTON's

staff will help her remember her own words when this proposal was launched by one of her opponents in 2000 when she was running for the United States Senate, where Senator CLINTON pointed out that it would be a "bad deal for New York and a potential bonanza for the oil companies," which is why she opposed it back then. Her words were true in 2000 and they are true today. In fact, it's even more important.

First of all, there is absolutely no evidence that States that have suspended the gas tax have ended up putting any more money in the pockets of consumers. The research suggests that it's more likely that they have simply increased the amount of money that goes to the oil companies who are not reducing their prices to compensate for the reduction. At a time when ExxonMobil's profits set a new record of \$40.6 billion, we don't have to give them even more money at the expense of our infrastructure, because this proposal comes at a time when for the first time in history the highway trust fund is going into deficit. And this proposal would add more than \$10 billion to that deficit, money that will not go to State and local governments to deal with badly needed transportation infrastructure. It comes at a time when we recognize that our infrastructure is falling apart. The Society of Civil Engineers has graded it D-minus, and they're grading on a curve.

It would be far more logical and effective to help poor citizens and people in rural districts that have to drive a great deal directly as a part of the economic stimulus, or a rebate that actually gets into their hands, not to the oil companies. It would make more sense to invest in renewable futures and green jobs, like not allowing the production tax credit to expire at the end of the year, costing thousands of jobs in the wind energy business.

It makes sense to rebuild and renew America with a vision for the future,

attaching a budget priority, and be honest with the American public, not cheap political tricks that may sound good for a moment but will end up hurting us in the long run.

GAS PRICES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Gas prices have skyrocketed by more than 50 percent in the 15 months since the new majority took control of Congress. Back in North Carolina, constituents of the Fifth District and over the rest of the State are now paying \$1.33 more per gallon for gas than when the Democrats took over.

Two years ago, Speaker PELOSI promised the American people a "commonsense" plan to lower gasoline prices. We're still trying to figure out what that plan is. House Democrats have not only failed to offer any meaningful solutions, they've pushed policies that will have precisely the opposite effect.

This \$1.33 Pelosi premium is putting tremendous pressure on the budgets of the hardworking people of North Carolina. As gas prices soar to \$3.50 and beyond, I pose this question: How much will the Pelosi premium end up costing average Americans? If this is part of the "commonsense plan" to lower gas prices, I'm afraid it isn't working.

Middle class families and their increasingly tight budgets need relief, not more broken promises. While House Democrats propose more of the same—tax increases—House Republicans have offered real commonsense solutions to reduce America's dependence on foreign sources of energy, lower gas prices here at home, and invest in all forms of energy to create American jobs and grow our economy.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

H2765