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House of Representatives

The House met at 9:30 a.m.

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Water, not only the essential planetary element, O Lord, water itself ushers in new human life. For Your people of covenant, both old and new, the symbol of water is complex, never stable, always fresh and beautiful, sometimes fearful and tragic.

As the Spring of Salvation, we call upon Your Holy Name to calm the waters of anxiety in mid-America. Enable Your people to cross these present waters of disaster and bring them to Your promised land of fruitful plenty.

In the book of Joshua, water upon the fleece is Joshua's own test of Your presence in the midst of trouble; later the way his people take water unto themselves becomes their measurement.

End this waterboarding of America's fields and rural towns even if we can no longer define torture ourselves. By the wellspring of Your Spirit, mix all our human endeavors with our natural resources in such an outstanding victory that believers and unbelievers alike will be touched again as in Joshua's day and acclaim: "Their hearts melted and became as water!"

This is our prayer now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HOLDEN). The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. SMITH) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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.



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Mr. SMITH of Nebraska led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 10 a.m.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 37 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

1000

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HOLDEN) at 10 a.m.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate concurs in the amendment of the House to the bill (S. 2146) "An Act to authorize the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to accept, as part of a settlement, diesel emission reduction Supplemental Environmental Projects, and for other purposes."

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 1-minute speeches on each side.

CONGRESS PROACTIVE IN ADDRESSING ENERGY PROBLEM

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

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, as prices at the pump continue to hit record highs, the time has come to put partisanship behind us and come together to work and solve the problems to help American people who are struggling to make ends meet.

We enacted legislation to inject into the market an additional 70,000 barrels of oil per day by suspending shipments to the Strategic Petroleum Reserve beginning two weeks from today. We raised auto fuel efficiency standards for the first time in 30 years. And we are nearing completion of a bill to regulate the speculators who manipulate the price of oil in the worldwide market.

This Congress has been proactive in doing everything we can to address the problem. Rather than pointing fingers, casting blame and trying to score cheap political points, I hope the minority in this Congress will join us in our effort to take swift and decisive action to address the rising price of gas.

GAS PRICES

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

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, for many Americans, pulling up to the gas station is becoming a dreaded event. There have been some short-term remedies, but with prices at \$4 per gallon, any relief must be paired with a broader energy plan which unlocks American resources.

Current U.S. policy unnecessarily keeps many areas off limits to exploration, restraining additional growth and supply. High fuel prices impact rural areas the hardest. Long commutes are a way of life, and crushing gas prices have hit farmers and ranchers in every aspect of their lives.

Unfortunately, several special interest groups have said no to virtually

every solution, including clean, renewable hydropower, non-emitting nuclear power, clean coal technology, wind power, and domestic exploration and development.

It has been over 20 years since President Ronald Reagan called on Congress to lease ANWR. It has been over 30 years since a new refinery has come on line. Since then, America has paid the price for delay, and we are paying the price every time we pull up to the pump.

DEMOCRATIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS ON THE ECONOMY

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

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, for years, President Bush has prioritized the needs of the wealthiest few while taking us deep into debt and into an economic recession. In the meantime, most Americans have been forgotten. That is, until the Democrats took control of Congress last year.

We were the first to recognize that our economy was headed for a recession and pushed the President to join us in passing the economic stimulus package that provided assistance to middle-income Americans. While that was a good start, we know that more needs to be done to help those who are not prospering under this Bush economy. That is why we extended unemployment insurance for the growing number of Americans looking for work and why we tackled the housing foreclosure crisis, so that millions of Americans can keep their homes. We also support a second economic stimulus plan that invests in America, rather than in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, House Democrats are serious about working in a bipartisan fashion to turn this economy around, and the best way to do that is to prioritize the needs of hardworking, middle-class Americans.

INCREASING SUPPLY TO LOWER GAS PRICES

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, it is really simple: If you want to help rural small town poor individuals in this country, we have to get the price of gas down. Here is the problem: January 2001, the price of a barrel of crude oil was \$23. When this majority came in, it was \$58. Now it is \$134. What does that translate into? From \$1.45 to \$2.23 to \$4.07. Add climate change, 50 cents additional. \$4.55, if you calculate climate change.

What is the solution? The solution is all of the above. Outer Continental Shelf exploration and recovery, coal-to-liquid technologies, solar and wind, renewable fuels. We need to do all the above, and you all need to help us.

We need to bring a bill to the floor that brings on more supply. We are willing to work with you. More supply is the only thing that we can do to bring down the cost of fuel which will help middle- and low-income Americans. We ask you to join us.

MISTAKES MADE IN AIR FORCE TANKER CONTRACT

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, last week it was revealed that the Air Force made a serious mistake in comparing the costs of tanker aircraft proposals offered by Northrop Grumman/ Airbus and Boeing.

When the Air Force awarded this \$40 billion contract to Northrop Grumman/ Airbus, it repeatedly said that the cost of the two planes was one of their top selection criteria. However this latest revelation, supported by both companies, undercuts the Air Force's assertion that they picked the most cost-effective aircraft and casts doubt on whether the two planes were evaluated fairly on the other criteria.

Take, for example, fuel usage. The Airbus tanker uses 24 percent more fuel than Boeing, about 400 gallons more per hour, and over 2 billion gallons of fuel each year. Yet the Air Force continues to claim that the Airbus tanker is the best value over the long term.

At a time of soaring fuel costs that calls into question whether the most cost-effective choice was made for our taxpayers and our airmen for a plane with a lifespan of 40 years, the selection of tanker aircraft will have far-reaching implications for our Nation's industrial base and our security. The Air Force must get it right and rebid this critical decision.

DRILL NOTHING CONGRESS

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the Drill Nothing Congress is still determined to drive the price of gasoline up by not allowing offshore drilling for crude oil and natural gas.

Americans think we are held hostage by OPEC and dictator Chavez for our crude oil, but the real culprit is Congress. Congress holds the keys to freedom from OPEC and the little dictator, but will not unlock the big door to independence.

Congress should lift the offshore drilling ban in the Gulf coast, the east coast and even the sacred west coast. Then let each State and its people decide whether or not to drill off their shores.

Congress should let States receive a portion of the oil lease revenues oil companies pay Uncle Sam for the privilege to drill and States to use this additional revenue to fund education or whatever they wish.

The Drill Nothing Congress seems to want gasoline prices to continue to rise to punish Americans for driving gasoline-powered vehicles. Congress is the problem. In the court of American public opinion, Congress is wrong for its hardheaded, absurd policy of don't drill in America. Meanwhile, gasoline continues to rise in price.

And that's just the way it is.

DEMOCRATS TAKE ACTION ON RECORD HIGH GAS PRICES

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

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, record high gas prices are forcing most American families to make some tough decisions this summer. While prices remain around \$4 a gallon, some families have to decide if they should take that planned summer vacation or not, while others are trying to determine what normal everyday drives can be eliminated because they simply cannot afford it.

This Democratic Congress recognizes the financial hardship these record prices are creating for everyone. That is why we have passed seven bills in the last couple of months to help lower prices.

We passed legislation in a strong, bipartisan fashion suspending sending more oil to the Strategic Petroleum Reserve until the end of the year, which will result in a 25 cents a gallon price reduction in July. We also passed legislation holding OPEC and big oil accountable for price fixing and cracking down on oil companies engaged in market manipulation.

Mr. Speaker, as Americans face continual pain at the pump, we should work in a strong bipartisan fashion to pass commonsense legislation that provides some immediate relief.

LISTENING TO CONSTITUENTS ON ENERGY PRICE INCREASES

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

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, as Congress continues its debate on domestic energy policy, we must be aware of what our constituents are saying, both at home and at work.

During this past week, I had the pleasure of touring two manufacturing plants in my district. These plants provide hundreds of good-paying jobs and produce high-quality products for our Nation's economy. During my tours, the management of these companies said that hands down, rising energy costs are their number one concern.

As energy costs rise, production costs rise as well at these plants. As production costs rise, companies all over the United States face competition from foreign manufacturers who have lower labor costs and, in some instances, lower fuel costs. Countries like China and India, who are currently exploring