

ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

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

Mr. MCHENRY. Madam Speaker, American energy independence is important. Let's face it, we simply cannot conserve our way to energy independence.

Conservation is a sign of personal virtue, but it will not lead to American energy independence. The way we can move to energy independence is by increasing our supply and increasing our refining capacity, increasing our investments in renewable energy sources, increasing our focus on conservation. All those things can work.

Instead, this Democrat Congress is focused on naming months, naming weeks, naming days. In fact, we have had 125 resolutions recognizing various days, weeks and months, including Frank Sinatra Day. I love Frank, but he's not going to take us to American energy independence. National Train Day, National Plumbing Industry Week, but where is National Energy Independence Day?

FRUSTRATED WITH THE HIGH PRICES

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

Mr. ARCURI. Madam Speaker, people around America are talking about gas. That's all we hear.

There is a difference, however. The people back home in upstate New York are talking about gas because they are frustrated with the high prices. Yet other people in this country are attempting to demagog this issue and to turn it into a political issue.

We listen to the oil company executives say that we should drill, drill, drill. Drill our way to energy independence. Well, that's an impossibility. They say it as if we should believe what the oil company executives tell us, because, after all, they have always told us the truth in the past. That's just not the way it is.

In fact, if you look at the facts, you will see that there are 68 million acres available for drilling in this country that oil companies have failed and refuse to drill upon. Yet they continue to talk about drill, drill, because they don't want the alternative. They don't want to talk about conservation, and they don't want to talk about alternative energy.

This is useless, and it's divisive to America. We need to find solutions by working together, not pointing the finger and blaming others.

DEMOCRAT CONGRESS DOESN'T GET IT

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

Mr. JORDAN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, the Democrat Congress doesn't get it. We have got terrorists who want to do us harm, and we have yet to pass the FISA law. We have troops on the battlefield, and we have yet to pass the supplemental to get them the resources they need to do their job.

We have got a \$10 trillion national debt, and yet the budget that was passed 3 weeks ago contains record levels of spending and the largest tax increase in history. Of course, we have got \$4 a gallon gasoline and still no up or down vote on energy, expanding energy exploration.

We need to drill, we need to drill now. It's time to stop talking and start doing.

OIL COMPANIES DON'T WANT TO FOLLOW THE RULES

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

Mr. McDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, I think I have walked into a meeting of the Republican drilling caucus. If they would remember a little history, they would remember that Mr. CHENEY had a meeting down at the White House back in 2001 and all of the oil company executives came in, and it was a secret meeting.

We have yet to find out who was there, what the agenda was, or whoever. But we can now, 8 years later, see the agenda, create chaos in the Middle East, attack Iraq, destabilize the oil fields, threaten Iran. Let's drive up the price of oil.

Gasoline was \$1.47 when George Bush took control, and here we are, it's \$4. They have absolutely succeeded.

Now at the end of that meeting they said, and, really, the best part of this is, we are going to get the right to drill in ANWR. Let's blame the environmentalists. They won't let us build refineries.

The reason we don't build refineries is because oil companies don't want to follow the rules. The only thing they drill the hole in is the bottom of the economic boat in this country.

CONVOLUTED NATIONAL ENERGY POLICY

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

Mr. CONAWAY. Madam Speaker, my previous colleague is a friend from Washington, but he really doesn't get it either.

When you have a convoluted national energy policy that the Democrats are putting forward, they meet themselves coming and going. On the one hand we have had speaker after speaker stand here today and tell us we can't drill our way out of it. Yet earlier this month we passed a bill that allows American citizens to sue OPEC to force them to produce more oil and gas.

The only way for them to produce more oil and gas is to drill more oil and gas. On the one hand they say production won't affect supply, and on the other hand they want to sue OPEC to force OPEC to produce more oil and gas so that we can buy it, from folks who are, at best, not our enemies.

This is wrongheaded on every level. I expect the OPEC companies today are working on legislation to allow their citizens to sue America to force America to produce her energy.

We can do better than this. We can quit talking past each other and make this thing work if we just do it.

KEEP JOBS IN AMERICA!

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

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, yesterday the GAO sustained a protest filed by Boeing Company over the Air Force's decision to award a lucrative contract for aerial refueling tankers to a team led by Northrop Grumman and the European firm behind Airbus.

GAO's decision followed a 100-day review of the Air Force's selection process for the \$35 billion tanker program. In the decision, GAO recommended that the Air Force reopen discussions with the contractors, obtain revised proposals and make a new decision. The Air Force was also directed to reimburse Boeing for the cost of the protest.

I am very pleased, as many Members of this body are, as millions of people across America are, and we hope the Air Force completely rebids the contract. But this opens a whole bigger issue that we ought to be discussing.

We need to step back, take a look at the bigger picture—the impact of the Defense Department contract outsourcing on American jobs. As we know, the American economy was founded with a base of manufacturing jobs. Today, it is still those jobs that keep the economy strong.

Right now the stock market is down, the dollar is down, unemployment numbers are up. It doesn't take a Harvard MBA to see our economy is faltering because of the erosion of manufacturing jobs.

Let's keep our jobs in America!

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 6041

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to have my name removed as a cosponsor H.R. 6041.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5781, FEDERAL EMPLOYEES PAID PARENTAL LEAVE ACT OF 2008

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I

call up House Resolution 1277 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 1277

Resolved, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 5781) to provide that 8 of the 12 weeks of parental leave made available to a Federal employee shall be paid leave, and for other purposes. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. The amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform now printed in the bill shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions of the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform; (2) the amendment printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution, if offered by Representative Davis of Illinois or his designee, which shall be in order without intervention of any point of order except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI, shall be considered as read, and shall be separately debatable for 10 minutes equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent; and (3) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. During consideration of H.R. 5781 pursuant to this resolution, notwithstanding the operation of the previous question, the Chair may postpone further consideration of the bill to such time as may be designated by the Speaker.

□ 1030

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Massachusetts is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS). All time yielded during consideration of the rule is for debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MCGOVERN. I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material into the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, H. Res. 1277 provides a structured rule for consideration of H.R. 5781, the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act of 2008. The resolution provides 1 hour of debate controlled by the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform and makes in order one of the two amendments submitted for consideration.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this rule and of the underlying legislation, H.R. 5781, the Federal Employees Paid Parental

Leave Act of 2008, which in my opinion is a sensible, compassionate bill that provides Federal employees with 4 weeks of paid leave for the birth or adoption of a child.

Today the Federal Government does not offer any paid time off specifically to care for an infant or newly adopted child. If a Federal employee needs time to take care of the newest addition to their family, their only option for paid leave is to use their accrued sick days and vacation time.

This policy is unfair and disadvantageous to relatively new Federal employees or those who have experienced extended health problems. Having a policy that assumes Federal employees will not get sick or take vacation is unsound and needs to be rectified.

Paid parental leave for Federal workers is long overdue, and it is a shame that the Federal Government, our country's largest employer, has not provided it yet. The Federal Government ought to set the standard as a family-friendly workplace, and not fall behind.

And even more especially in this economic downturn, the Federal Government needs to step up and provide its families with paid leave. It is unconscionable, Madam Speaker, to ask parents to choose between their job and their new child in these harsh economic times.

With two full-time working parents being the standard nowadays, forcing families to lose one salary while they face astronomical food and energy prices is unacceptable.

Now some may claim that we are expanding the total amount of time a Federal employee may take off to care for a new child. Let me be clear, this bill does not expand the amount of leave currently available to Federal employees. This bill simply allows for 4 weeks of paid leave out of the 12 weeks that Federal employees currently receive under the Family and Medical Leave Act. The bill does not expand the total amount of time a person may take off under FMLA, and any claims to the contrary are simply false.

Madam Speaker, it is also important to note that this legislation will not affect the strength of our Nation's military. Since the Armed Forces set their own policies for leave, active duty soldiers are exempt from H.R. 5781. However, this legislation will provide 4 weeks of paid leave to the 400,000 civilian employees of the Department of Defense that serve with our armed forces at military bases across the country and around the world.

We depend on these mothers and fathers to make America safe, and providing them with 4 weeks of paid leave to care for their child is a much needed and much-deserved benefit.

Lastly, providing paid parental leave is a good recruitment tool for the Federal Government. In order to attract the best and the brightest and retain talent in our Federal workforce, Congress must provide important incen-

tives like paid parental leave. I encourage my colleagues to stand up for families by supporting this rule and the underlying bill.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, I want to thank my friend from Massachusetts for yielding me this time to discuss the proposed rule for consideration of the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act.

I rise in opposition to this so-called structured rule which makes in order no Republican amendments and the only amendment that it does allow is a Democrat manager's amendment, and to this legislation, which would provide government bureaucrats with benefits in excess of what four out of five hardworking private sector employees enjoy.

I disagree with the gentleman from Massachusetts, I think Federal Government work is very important to this country, but I believe that we do not need to extend benefits, to further ask for or to make ourselves available to as an incentive for hardworking people to come to work for the Federal Government. Thus, Madam Speaker, I am opposed to the underlying legislation.

Madam Speaker, as the father of two children, one of whom is a person with Down's syndrome and whose birth was more medically complicated than most children's, I understand the importance of families and their ability to deal with their problems. I return home each week to Dallas, Texas, after votes to be with my family, and families are important. I, like every other Member, understand the importance of family and how strong families are important to our country.

The question is not whether Congress should support families, but whether it makes sense when so many American families are already struggling with the high price of gas and other economic concerns to increase their tax burden to pay for this increased paid time off from work, especially in light of the fact that Federal workers don't really seem to need it or even be asking for it.

Currently, Federal Government employees between the ages of 20 and 45, those employees most likely to take advantage of this benefit expansion, have an average combined leave of over 7 weeks a year. But for even those workers with the least amount of Federal service, between 1 and 2 years, this program is duplicative because on average they already have a balance of 3.4 weeks of combined leave already at their disposal.

These generous paid leave policies already in place are why 88 percent of the 221,000 respondents to the 2006 Federal Human Capital Survey described themselves as "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with their paid leave for illness, including family care situations, for example what is talked about in this bill, childbirth, adoption or elderly care, and less than 5 percent described themselves as dissatisfied in any way.

What a shame we are trying to give away a benefit that taxpayers are going to pay for when it is not needed, and most of all, not even asked for.

Of course, creating this new, extra paid leave perk following the birth, adoption or fostering of a child, and include a provision that would allow the Office of Personnel Management to double the amount of paid leave to a total of 8 weeks, comes at a high cost. By the way, that 8 weeks may be asked for with no excuse or no reason necessary at all, simply by requesting it.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that this new benefit in search of a problem would cost \$850 million over 5 years. Pretty tough for a new majority that thinks that they want to have pay-as-you-go rules when now we are going to add a new \$850 million worth of cost.

Madam Speaker, at a time when the average hardworking American families are already struggling and working more hours to fill their tanks because of this Democrat Congress's refusal to do anything constructive to address the high cost of energy, I don't believe it is appropriate for Congress to increase the paid leave of Federal bureaucrats beyond their already generous levels, and using taxpayer dollars.

As an alternative to today's legislation, the administration has proposed a fiscally responsible but functionally similar program: short-term disability insurance which would assist employees who need to use large amounts of time due to pregnancy, recovering from childbirth, accident or illness.

Because the majority of Federal employees, almost 60 percent, are not within the standard childbearing age, this proposal would be a better and more efficient fit for both employees and for the taxpayer and the Federal Government in dealing with the needs and costs associated with employees that need an extended period of time away for a number of reasons.

By providing Federal agencies with additional benefits that better meet the needs of the 21st century worker, the administration's short-term disability insurance proposal would safeguard Federal employees during a period of temporary inability to perform normal occupational duties while also safeguarding the pockets of the American taxpayer.

Despite the Office of Personnel Management providing this commonsense legislation proposal to Speaker PELOSI on March 4, 2008, today this Democrat-run House will only have the opportunity to vote on one functionally closed rule and the underlying legislation, with all of the other good ideas provided by Republicans completely shut out on this debate.

I encourage all of my colleagues to vote against this rule and the egregious underlying legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I just want to respond by saying that

Members on both sides of the aisle like to talk about family values all the time. Well, this is an effort that actually puts some real action behind those words. This is about helping families. I find it somehow puzzling that anybody would think this is a radical idea. And I would say to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, you know, you have messed up our economy, you have increased financial insecurity amongst working families in this country, you have done everything you can to help the oil companies at the expense of average citizens who are now paying extraordinary prices at the gas tank. I mean, you have put working families at an extreme disadvantage.

This is an effort to provide a little bit of relief when somebody has a new baby or adopts a new child. Boy, to think that is a radical idea just to me defies reason.

At this time I would like to yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY), the author of this legislation.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. I thank the gentleman for his leadership on so many important issues and for supporting working families. This is the 21st century. Both the father and the mother have to work, and this is an important family friendly, family value legislation.

How many times have we heard the friends on the opposite side of the aisle talk about family values? Well, today we will have an opportunity to vote and do something to help families. Today we will take up my legislation, the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act. This bill will provide 4 weeks of paid leave to Federal employees when they have a new child or adopt a new child.

If we truly believe in the value of family, then we need to value the work that families do. This means that we need to stop asking parents to choose between a paycheck and caring for a new child. Unlike a generation ago, today both parents work outside the home, and both need time off from work when they have a new child, yet most do not have access to paid family leave.

By providing paid parental leave to Federal employees, H.R. 5781 establishes the Federal Government as a model employer. A recent study found that out of 173 countries, 169 countries offered guaranteed leave with income to women in connection with childbirth. This ties the United States with Swaziland and New Guinea in terms of what we are offering in paid leave for new families.

This landmark bill is the first to provide paid family leave for new parents. It signals our commitment to valuing our employees and their families. This bill is good for the Federal agencies, it is good for Federal employees, and it is cost effective.

The lack of paid family leave puts Federal agencies at a disadvantage when competing for the best and the

brightest employees. Our Federal workforce is aging and many of our agencies are finding it difficult to recruit and retain younger workers.

□ 1045

Providing paid parental leave would encourage younger workers who may be considering having a family to stay with the Federal Government.

Paid parental leave is already offered by the largest and most profitable U.S. companies. My staff at the Joint Economic Committee found that the Federal Government lags far behind Fortune 100 companies in providing paid leave as part of their benefits package. Fortune 100 companies overwhelmingly offer new mothers paid leave lasting 6 to 8 weeks long.

Federal employees who become new parents have the option of using their accrued vacation time, some sick days only if they're sick or tapping into a leave bank. This may work for the lucky families who never get sick, never need a vacation and are happy to rely on the kindness of strangers, but for many this is a second-rate solution, since even the best prepared employees often face difficult choices when children need their care.

The only national policy that covers parental leave is the Family and Medical Leave Act which provides up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave and job protection. The Family and Medical Leave Act is important, but because it is unpaid, many, especially low wage or younger workers with limited savings, cannot afford to use it.

H.R. 5781 is cost-effective. And the Congressional Budget Office reports that it is PAYGO compliant.

In testimony in support of this bill, Daniel Beard, Chief Administrative Officer of the U.S. House of Representatives noted: "This approach saves money. Employee morale is always greater when an employer treats employees with dignity, especially in times of crisis." I could not agree more with him.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman's time has expired.

Mr. MCGOVERN. I yield the gentlewoman an additional 1 minute.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, I know that many of you are scratching your heads and wondering how this bill can be PAYGO neutral. It is easy to explain. The \$190 million is the amount that the agencies currently save on salaries when Federal employees who have a new child take their unpaid leave, as they are entitled to under the Family and Medical Leave Act.

After we implement H.R. 5781, it will be up to the Federal agencies to implement this new benefit and whether they will ask for increased appropriations in the future.

But let's remember, right now Federal employees who have a child bear both the burden of going without pay during family and medical leave, as well as coping with their new family

expenses. This is an opportunity for us to put action behind our rhetoric on family values.

I urge strong bipartisan support. It is supported by TOM DAVIS on the other side of the aisle, the ranking member of the Government Reform and Oversight Committee which considered and reported out this bill.

And I thank Chairman WAXMAN and many others for their strong support.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, I really do appreciate the gentleman, my friend from Massachusetts' characterization of Republicans wrecking the economy and all these things, negative things that the Republicans have done at the expense of the American taxpayer.

And yet I think that the American public understands who balanced the budget back in 1997. It was the Republican-led Congress. It was the American people who said we ought to balance the budget.

When I first came to Congress some 12 years ago, I did this under the pretext of balancing the budget and, secondly, growing the economy, growing the economy through the creation of new jobs.

So how well did Republicans do? Let's see. Balanced the budget in 1997 because we forced it; 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, and 2001. In 2001 this country was struck by terrorists. That's right. We've not balanced the budget since. But what we have done during that period of time is created economic opportunity, economic opportunity for millions of Americans, created 5.3 million new jobs. That was the free enterprise system that did that, but it was done through the policies of this body, lowering taxes, giving working families more money back home, taking 5 million people completely off the tax rolls so they could take care of themselves.

And now, here today what we see is a bigger government, a government that will cost almost a billion dollars more as a result of what we're doing here.

So it's amazing to see how my good friends on the other side come and talk about how irresponsible we were, and yet, what we've done, when Republicans led, was to create new jobs in this country, to make sure that we grew our economy.

I see nothing, nothing in the Democratic budget or the bills that they've passed that have created new jobs. As a matter of fact, the gentleman from Massachusetts referred to the Republicans and President Bush wrecking the economy.

In fact, what happened is, you can just look at it directly on a calendar. The day America began having economic problems was the day this new Democrat majority was elected; came in and promised higher taxes, promised the opportunity for a new direction, higher gas prices.

Then what are we told?

We're told by the leaders of the Democratic Party, America, you're going to have to change the way you

live your life. This sounds a lot like the mid 1970s when we had President Carter around. We're going to have to change the way you live your life.

Government knows best. That's what we're here on the floor talking about today. Government knows best. We're going to give a group of very faithful Federal employees a new opportunity that will cost almost a billion dollars more to Federal employees. And yet, my colleagues will stand up and talk about Republicans ruining the economy.

Now that's not what ruins the economy. What ruins the economy is bigger government, bigger government, more spending and continuation of the assault on the investor in this country.

So the Republican Party, once again, is in favor of a balanced budget. We're not in favor of wrecking the economy.

The Republican Party is in favor of us allowing drilling to take place in this country. Some of my colleagues this morning talked about, you know, all these millions of acres. Well, there's not oil under all those millions of acres. Trust me. Energy exploration companies will go where the energy is.

And yet, now we're talking about adding almost a billion dollars' worth of new spending on the taxpayers that are already having trouble paying for their own gasoline. And we're going to talk about raising taxes. That is how you ruin the economy. That is how you lose jobs instead of job creation and balancing the budget.

The Republican Party does get it. We do recognize that there are tough times there. I go back every weekend. I've never missed a weekend going back home in 12 years. I do get it. I see people at the grocery store. I know how much the cost of a gallon of gasoline is. I'm not sure all the leaders of this House of Representatives do know that.

So we ought to be working to find ways to reduce cost, to make government more efficient, not to find a way to add overhead. Unfortunately, that's what this new Democrat majority is all about; raising taxes, more rules and regulation, making government more powerful by, in this instance, giving Federal employees who don't even ask for it, want it or need it, more time off, and have the taxpayer pay for it.

Madam Speaker, I do disagree with the legislation. And I will tell you that I think the American public, as they learn more about it during this debate, will come to the same conclusion.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. May I inquire to the gentleman how many more speakers he has.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Massachusetts has 20½ minutes. The gentleman from Texas has 23.

Mr. MCGOVERN. And may I ask the gentleman from Texas if he has any other speakers.

Mr. SESSIONS. I do not have any additional speakers other than myself.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Then I will let the gentleman close, because we don't have any other speakers either.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, I think what we have talked about today is an opportunity where the Republican Party presented an alternative to Speaker PELOSI, an alternative based upon a perception of a problem by the Democrat majority.

President Bush, last March, came to the table and said, let's use a free market approach that does allow families the opportunity, when they need time, to have that time and to utilize it. But let's let those individual families make their own decision, based upon disability insurance.

I understood a long time ago, from my previous job, when I had a very large team size of people that I worked with, that really, the American worker, at least where I was, was satisfied that they had a job and earned enough money to put food on the table, but also competed for family time and they needed time at home. That I understand.

But I encourage that in terms of being able to take time off. And having unpaid leave through a disability insurance program, is the right way to do this. So the Republican Party, through the President of the United States, brought this to Speaker PELOSI.

Instead, what we got was a billion-dollar answer to the taxpayer, a billion dollars more of spending, a billion dollars more of having the taxpayer have to pay things, and a billion dollars more, so the Republican Party comes to the table and says, why don't we try and balance our budget, rather than making government bigger and spending more money?

That's what we're doing here today. We are politely coming to the table in this constitutional body and saying, we disagree.

Since taking control of Congress in 2007, this Democrat Congress has totally been negligent in its responsibility to do anything constructive to address the domestic supply issues that have created the biggest problem that we have in America today, and that is energy and the cost of energy. Skyrocketing gas, diesel and energy costs are facing the American public today big time back home.

Meanwhile, we find that the Congress is trying to spend another billion dollars.

So today I urge my colleagues to vote with me to defeat the previous question so this House can finally consider real solutions to the energy costs.

If the previous question is defeated, I will move to amend the rule to allow for consideration of H.R. 2279, which would expand the American refinery capacity on closed military installations. That's right. We're suggesting that we will use Federal installations that have closed to have a better way to make sure that we have more gasoline available.

This bill was introduced by my dear friend, JOE PITTS of Pennsylvania, way

back in May of 2007, over a year ago. See, Republicans saw it a year ago as a problem, and came to the table with answers and questions about what we can do.

This legislation would reduce the price of gasoline by streamlining the refinery application process, and by requiring the President to open at least three closed military installations for the purpose of setting new and providing new, reliable American refineries.

Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to have the text of the amendment and extraneous material inserted into the RECORD prior to the vote on the previous question.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. SESSIONS. I urge my colleagues to take a second look, to become a student, just as we're asking the American public, to look at who really is trying to address the issue of the cost of energy. We're asking the American public to look into, and to see who's really getting gouged. Who really is getting gouged?

And it's families back home. It's businesses that are trying to provide services. It is our airlines that are trying to make sure that we keep this economy going.

And what do we hear back from Washington, DC? Let's sue OPEC. Let's tax Big Oil. Let's stick it to Big Oil.

Well, in fact, what we ought to be saying is that energy companies are our friends. Energy companies need to and want to supply cost-effective and reliable opportunities for the American public to have gasoline without long lines.

□ 1100

What are the energy companies saying? They're saying, Please give us the opportunity to go where there is oil or the perception that there's oil and go looking for it and provide it to the American public. It's American security. It is the opportunity for America to be able to use its own resources.

Is this the final answer? Heck no. That's not the final answer. What we're trying to do is bridge us through this until the technologies of, as we know, the battery-operated car and other technologies are coming to fruition, but in the meantime, we should not be spending our hundreds of billions of dollars that this Democrat majority is allowing to happen because they're cutting off American energy to go overseas to keep building Dubai and the next cities and countries that are after that off American money.

Madam Speaker, I really believe that the American public, when they understand, because they will become students of this issue, they will see that the opportunities for American energy, American security, American independence, and American jobs are what are on the line. And then they will look

up and know that there's very consistent behavior. They will know which group of people in Washington, DC is really for them.

Today, we see where that same group of people, the United States Congress, is going to come together and say who is going to add another billion dollars to the price tag of running government, who is the same party that cuts off and won't even accept the good ideas of allowing more drilling here in the United States for American security. They're going to draw a conclusion. And that conclusion is going to be, they're going to see which group of people has the best ideas to empower job growth and investment in this country.

Who are the people that really are aiming at balancing our budget? Who is the group of people that are trying to do every single thing that we can to protect this country? Madam Speaker, that is the Republican Party. The Republican Party is trying to make sure that the taxpayer of this country does not pay higher taxes. The Republican Party is trying to make sure that we have enough energy, American energy, available for consumers of this country. And we are standing up today saying we do not believe adding almost a billion dollars worth of new spending for Federal employee benefits is the right thing to do right now.

So we're going to ask that our Members vote against this bill. We're going to ask that we do something by voting against this bill and voting for the motion to recommit.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlelady from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) for a unanimous consent request.

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I thank the distinguished gentleman from Massachusetts, and I thank the minority for their indulgence.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5781, the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act of 2008, introduced by my colleague and fellow Women's Caucus member, Congresswoman CAROLYN MALONEY of New York.

This legislation provides 4 weeks of paid parental leave for all Federal employees. Employees will also for the first time be allowed to use their accrued sick leave for an additional 8 weeks of paid leave. By combining the 4 weeks of paid parental leave with earned sick leave, many Federal employees will now be able to get paid for the full 12 weeks of parental leave that is their right under the existing Family and Medical Leave Act.

However, this legislation is about more than a technical fix to current law. As we celebrated our fathers only last week, we recognized the significance of family of the various roles we all play. Mothers and fathers should be allowed to be there for the birth or adoption of a new child. This legislation reinforces the belief in family. Be it grandmother, grandfather,

uncle, aunt, or mom and dad—our families deserve to be supported and valued.

In my district of Houston, Texas, there are over 70,000 single parent households run by women and over 22,000 Federal employees in my district. This legislation gives them the time they need to bond with a new child. It has been proven time and time again that the first few weeks post-birth are essential to parent and child bonding. This is true be they natural or adopted children.

This legislation should be titled Celebrating and Supporting Our Families Act because that is exactly what it seeks to do. It also provides that support for our employees here on Capitol Hill.

This act allows Federal employees to substitute any available paid leave for any leave without pay available for either the: (1) birth of a child; or (2) placement of a child with the employee for either adoption or foster care. Makes available for any of the 12 weeks of leave an employee is entitled to for such purposes: (1) four administrative weeks of paid parental leave in connection with the birth or placement involved; and (2) any accumulated annual or sick leave.

Authorizes the Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to increase the amount of paid parental leave available to up to eight administrative workweeks, based on the consideration of: (1) the benefits provided to the Federal Government of offering paid parental leave, including enhanced recruitment and retention of employees; (2) the cost to the Federal Government of increasing the amount of paid parental leave that is available to employees; (3) trends in the private sector and in State and local governments with respect to offering paid parental leave; and (4) the Federal Government's role as a model employer.

Amends the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 and the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 to allow the same substitution for covered congressional employees, Government Accountability Office (GAO) and Library of Congress employees.

Defines "qualified leave" as leave that: (1) is available by reason of the need to care for the spouse, child, or parent of the employee having a serious health condition or by reason of a serious health condition affecting the employees that renders such employee unable to perform the functions of his or her position; and (2) would otherwise be leave without pay.

This act is a tremendous step and makes unequivocally clear, and dispels any belief that this act applies only to women. It does not. Members on both sides of the aisle talk about family values, but one of the most concrete ways we can help families is to give parents more time with their new children, without losing their paycheck. The Federal Government can be a model for other employers. I therefore encourage my colleagues to support this legislation and demonstrate by their actions that they support our families.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, let me reiterate something I said earlier in the debate, and that is the Republican Congress and this Republican President have made a mess of this economy. Their legacy is a lousy economy. There are more people every day losing their jobs. Their legacy is that they have left my kids with a \$300 billion deficit and a \$9.4 trillion debt, the largest debt in the history of the United States of

America. That's their legacy. That's their great economic achievement.

Their legacy is basically no energy policy except whatever the oil companies want, and that's what they have done when they were in power. Whatever the oil companies want, the oil companies get.

And quite frankly, it kind of took my breath away when I heard my colleague talk about the oil companies as "our friends." Well, with friends like the oil companies, the consumers do not need enemies.

In 2002, the profits of the oil companies were at about \$30 billion. In 2007, it's \$123.3 billion. And yet we have seen rising gas prices. The consumers have been gouged. These oil companies have ripped off the citizens of this country.

The fact of the matter is that there are 68 million acres onshore and offshore in the United States that are leased by oil companies open to drilling and actually under lease, but they're not developed. They have 68 million acres. The fact is if oil companies tapped the 68 million Federal acres of leased land, it could generate an estimated 4.8 million barrels of oil a day, six times what ANWR would produce at its peak.

The fact is 80 percent of the oil available on the Outer Continental Shelf is in regions that are already open to leasing, but the oil companies have not decided it's worth their time to drill there.

The fact is that drilling in the Arctic Wildlife Refuge wouldn't yield any oil for 10 years and then would only save the consumer 1.8 cents per gallon in 2025. The bottom line is, Madam Speaker, is that these oil companies choose not to drill for more oil. They choose instead to do what they're doing and put the burden on the American consumer.

I have heard the issue about we need to expand refinery capacity. Well, we currently have excess oil refinery capacity. According to the Energy Information Administration, our refineries are currently running at 88 percent capacity, well below the 95 to 98 percent capacity, use rates we've seen this time of year for the last decade.

Now, no new oil refineries have been built in the last 30 years because major oil companies have not sought to build them. They have the ability. They've not sought to build them. ExxonMobil, Chevron, ConocoPhillips, BP, and Shell have publicly stated that they have no plans to build new refineries. Instead, they prefer to expand existing facilities. Shell, ConocoPhillips, and BP all testified that they were unaware of any environmental regulations preventing them from building new refineries or expanding existing ones. So there is nothing in the way that's preventing them from expansion.

And internal memos from oil companies make it clear that oil companies have decided that they needed to reduce refinery capacity to drive up their profits. They don't care. They don't

care about the consumer. All they care about is profits. And for too long, our energy policy under the Republican Congress and this Republican President has been to give the oil companies whatever they want. We have done that, and we are now paying the price.

I should also point out that this Congress has enacted a number of pieces of legislation to try to deal with this issue. Interestingly enough, most of them have been either vetoed or threatened to be vetoed by the President. It's also interesting to note that among those that the President has threatened to veto are legislation that would take away the tax breaks and subsidies that we provide Big Oil, the companies that are making record profits, and put that into renewable clean forms of energy. That's what the administration is aghast at. They can't believe that we'd want to take away taxpayer subsidies to Big Oil, the companies that are now ripping off the American consumer, and put that into alternative energy research and development so that we're not so reliant on oil and we could become more energy independent.

We have tried to take the lead on energy independence in this Congress, but we have run into roadblocks by the Republicans here in the House, Republicans in the Senate, and this administration.

I would also point out that the American people get it. One of the reasons why Republicans are losing elections is because the American people are fed up with their policies. They want a new direction, and they will get a new direction come November with an expanded Democratic majority here in the House and in the Senate and a Democratic President.

Finally, Madam Speaker, let me just once again reiterate to my colleagues the importance of the underlying legislation. The Federal Employees Paid Parents Leave Act does not change the fundamental principles of the Family and Medical Leave Act in any way. The bill does not expand the number of weeks of leave available to workers under FMLA, the bill does not expand the number of employees who are eligible for FMLA leave, and the bill does not grant employees any additional sick leave.

For Federal employees who are currently entitled to FMLA coverage, this bill would simply allow them to be paid for four of those weeks if used for parental use, if used to care for a newborn child or a newly adopted child. I mean, this to me is common sense. This is the right thing to do.

As I said, Members talk all the time about family values. Well, here is our chance to show that we mean what we say. I would urge my colleagues to support the underlying bill. I urge a "yes" vote on the previous question and on the rule.

The material previously referred to by Mr. SESSIONS is as follows:

AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 1277 OFFERED BY MR. SESSIONS OF TEXAS

At the end of the resolution, add the following:

SEC. 3. Immediately upon the adoption of this resolution the House shall, without intervention of any point of order, consider in the House the bill (H.R. 2279) to expedite the construction of new refining capacity on closed military installations in the United States. All points of order against the bill are waived. The bill shall be considered as read. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and any amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate on the bill equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and the chairman and ranking member of the Committee on Armed Services; and (2) an amendment in the nature of a substitute if offered by Representative Dingell of Michigan or Representative Skelton of Missouri, which shall be considered as read and shall be separately debatable for 40 minutes equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent; and (3) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

(The information contained herein was provided by Democratic Minority on multiple occasions throughout the 109th Congress.)

THE VOTE ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION: WHAT IT REALLY MEANS

This vote, the vote on whether to order the previous question on a special rule, is not merely a procedural vote. A vote against ordering the previous question is a vote against the Democratic majority agenda and a vote to allow the opposition, at least for the moment, to offer an alternative plan. It is a vote about what the House should be debating.

Mr. Clarence Cannon's Precedents of the House of Representatives, (VI, 308-311) describes the vote on the previous question on the rule as "a motion to direct or control the consideration of the subject before the House being made by the Member in charge." To defeat the previous question is to give the opposition, a chance to decide the subject before the House. Cannon cites the Speaker's ruling of January 13, 1920, to the effect that "the refusal of the House to sustain the demand for the previous question passes the control of the resolution to the opposition" in order to offer an amendment. On March 15, 1909, a member of the majority party offered a rule resolution. The House defeated the previous question and a member of the opposition rose to a parliamentary inquiry, asking who was entitled to recognition. Speaker Joseph G. Cannon (R-Illinois) said: "The previous question having been refused, the gentleman from New York, Mr. Fitzgerald, who had asked the gentleman to yield to him for an amendment, is entitled to the first recognition.

Because the vote today may look bad for the Democratic majority they will say "the vote on the previous question is simply a vote on whether to proceed to an immediate vote on adopting the resolution . . . [and] has no substantive legislative or policy implications whatsoever." But that is not what they have always said. Listen to the definition of the previous question used in the Floor Procedures Manual published by the Rules Committee in the 109th Congress (page 56). Here's how the Rules Committee described the rule using information from Congressional Quarterly's "American Congressional Dictionary": "If the previous question is defeated, control of debate shifts to the leading opposition member (usually the minority Floor Manager) who then manages an

hour of debate and may offer a germane amendment to the pending business.

Deschler's Procedure in the U.S. House of Representatives, the subchapter titled "Amending Special Rules" states: "a refusal to order the previous question on such a rule [a special rule reported from the Committee on Rules] opens the resolution to amendment and further debate." (Chapter 21, section 21.2) Section 21.3 continues: Upon rejection of the motion for the previous question a resolution reported; from the Committee on Rules, control shifts to the Member leading the Opposition to the previous question, who may offer a proper amendment or motion and who controls the time for debate thereon."

Clearly, the vote on the previous question on a rule does have substantive policy implications. It is one of the only available tools for those who oppose the Democratic majority's agenda and allows those with alternative views the opportunity to offer an alternative Plan.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. SESSION. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

WAIVING REQUIREMENT OF CLAUSE 6(a) OF RULE XIII WITH RESPECT TO CONSIDERATION OF CERTAIN RESOLUTIONS

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 1281 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 1281

Resolved, That the requirement of clause 6(a) of rule XIII for a two-thirds vote to consider a report from the Committee on Rules on the same day it is presented to the House is waived with respect to any resolution reported on the legislative day of June 19, 2008, providing for consideration or disposition of a measure making supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from New York is recognized for 1 hour.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

For the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER). All time yielded during consideration of the rule is for debate only.

I yield myself such time as I may consume and ask unanimous consent that all Members be given 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on House Resolution 1281.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, H. Res. 1281 waives clause 6(a) of rule XIII which requires a two-thirds vote to consider a rule on the same day it is reported from the Rules Committee. The waiver would apply to any rule reported on the legislative day of June 19, 2008, that provides for consideration or disposition of a measure making supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year 2008.

Madam Speaker, with the passage of this rule, the House would move one step closer to taking up the supplemental appropriations bill, a bill forged in bipartisan compromise that provides funding for our troops currently on the ground, critical domestic savings for Americans calling out for relief, and a dramatic expansion for veterans' educational benefits.

The same-day rule will allow us to do all of this in an expedited manner. Later today, the Rules Committee will report out a rule that will give the Chamber the opportunity to debate the bipartisan legislation dealing with some of the most pressing issues facing our Nation today.

I urge a "yes" vote on the rule.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DREIER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

I want to begin by expressing my great appreciation to the very able and distinguished Chair of the Committee on Rules, my dear friend from Rochester (Ms. SLAUGHTER) for yielding me the customary 30 minutes.

And I will say, Madam Speaker, that I stand here with somewhat mixed emotions. While I am happy that we are going to finally ensure that our men and women in uniform who are on the front lines ensuring the safety of our fellow Americans are going to have the funding that is necessary, I'm saddened that we are here at this juncture considering this measure under a process which was not at all necessary.

Madam Speaker, if we had, literally months ago, months ago, come to this point, we could have, under regular order, very easily provided the necessary troop funding that is out there, dealt with the issue of unemployment benefits, which is going to be addressed, and ensure that we're not going to put into place a massive tax increase on job creators here in the United States.

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So I will say, Madam Speaker, that we want to do everything that we can to, as expeditiously as possible, meet the demand that has been set forward by our leaders on the frontline in the field in Iraq and Afghanistan.

I hope very much that my colleagues will join with me. It's not normal that I would support this structure that would allow for same-day consideration of the measure, but I believe it is im-

perative that we get funding to our troops, and I believe that the measure that we're going to consider in just a little while from now will allow us to do that.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, just one response to my good friend from California and my dear friend, that had the Republican Party voted for the last supplemental bill which funded the troops, it would not be necessary to be here today.

Mr. DREIER. Would the gentlewoman yield on that point?

Ms. SLAUGHTER. I will be happy to yield.

Mr. DREIER. I will simply say that there were very important reasons that we did not support it: a massive tax increase that was imposed on working Americans and job creators.

This measure that we are going to be considering later today is one that I believe we can have support from the United States Senate on and support from the President on. And we know full well that had that measure passed this House that we would have ended up right where we are today because the President would have vetoed the bill if it had gotten there, and most likely, would have not gotten through the Senate.

So I thank my friend for yielding. Let's move ahead. We have a bipartisan compromise right now, and I believe it is beneficial.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. I just want to make one inquiry: Is the massive tax increase you're talking about the extension of unemployment benefits?

Mr. DREIER. If I could ask my friend to further yield, I will say absolutely not. I will tell you that what I was talking about was the tax that is imposed on those people in upper income brackets, 82 percent of whom are small business owners in this country. That's the tax that we were talking about in the last measure, and that played a big role in leading those of us who want to ensure that we get this economy growing again that we would not, in fact, impinge on that by imposing that tax increase.

So I will say to my friend, let's move ahead. Let's make sure that we get the important funding to our troops so that we can be successful in ensuring our safety, and I thank my friend for yielding.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Well, I will just close by saying we've been trying very hard to do just that.

I yield back the balance of my time and move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings