

the lesson for today is we should not be punishing America by refusing to drill offshore. Maybe we should drill offshore because we can do so safely and because it has been proven in the past that we can drill safely. There is only a small portion off the U.S. coasts where leasing is allowed, but we know there is crude oil off the east coast, off the sacred west coast and even in other areas of the Gulf of Mexico, so maybe we should drill there as one solution to the problem of high gasoline prices. We need more supply, and this is one way to do it.

And that's just the way it is.

THE PRESIDENT'S CALL TO LIFT THE BAN ON OFFSHORE OIL DRILLING

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

Mr. McDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, we've just been treated to a lecture to a third grade class about what pollution we ought to worry about. Apparently, my colleague from Texas doesn't understand that the problem is that, when you burn oil, you pollute the atmosphere, and that's where the real problem is and why finding more oil is not the answer to the world's problems.

The American people have had a few days to consider the President's call to lift the ban on offshore oil drilling. The New York Times calls it "The Big Pander to Big Oil," saying, "This is worse than a dumb idea. It is cruelly misleading. It will make only a modest difference, at best, to prices at the pump, and even then, the benefits will be years away."

The Los Angeles Times was even blunter in its characterization of this proposal by our President. It said, "It's nonsense for them to use the run-up in gas prices as an excuse to advocate offshore drilling." Continuing, "What's really needed, though, is a moratorium on worthless suggestions from politicians for lowering gas prices."

The Seattle Post-Intelligencer's editorial, up north from Los Angeles, said, "Offshore drilling: This well is dry." They said, "But drilling/plundering our coasts for about 19 billion barrels of oil—that's really all that's available—is akin to placing a Band-Aid on the hemorrhaging wound that is our oil-dependent, wasteful lifestyle."

The Seattle Times called it Bush's last gasp on oil, and their editorial said, "Longing for a higher mileage vehicle in the face of gasoline at \$4.30 a gallon? The President's response has been ANWR, not CAFE. (Corporate Average Fuel Economy)—drilling in a wildlife refuge, not fuel efficiency."

There's a pattern here from coast to coast. The American people are tired of rhetoric that fails to meet the reality test. The oil industry already has access to 68 million acres of Federal oil reserves, but they are only pumping out press releases. The President al-

ready has access to mountains of data on the urgent need to dramatically change our energy policy to focus on renewable resources, conservation and efficiency. Instead, the President gives us political expediency that will not fill a gas tank, that will not lower gas prices and that will not help our addiction to oil.

For the first time, Congress will have to go it alone to shape energy policy for the 21st century. NANCY PELOSI, our Speaker, has shown that the people's House is up to the task. This week, the House will consider several bills from Democratic leadership that builds upon our existing record for bold, new energy legislation. We are going to take up legislation that holds oil companies accountable, but the fact is we may not get it all done, and we may have to wait for a new President. As long as the oil dynasty occupies 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, we're not going to get any serious changes in this country.

So hang onto your hats, folks. You're going to have a lot of trouble with oil prices and with gas prices over the next few months.

BATTLING OIL AND GAS POWER PLAYS

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

Mr. OLVER. Madam Speaker, we are witnessing the mother of all oil and gas power plays in this country. Big Oil and their allies are desperately trying to open every possible site for oil drilling before the Texas oil men, Bush and CHENEY, leave the White House in January.

Under the Bush-Cheney-McCain plan, were it to become law, every acre of the Outer Continental Shelf, 50 to 200 miles offshore, and all of our coastline would be open to leasing and drilling. You can bet your home that the most promising areas for oil production would be fully leased at the foolish, long-term, low-price policy now in effect, but that's all. There's no certainty that the newly leased areas would be producing a drop of oil 10 years out. Big Oil could simply bank their cheap long-term leases until the price of oil reaches \$200 or even \$500 per barrel. And we, the Congress and country, would be over the barrel. That, after all, has been the history.

The claim has been made that opening the Outer Continental Shelf would unlock 86 billion barrels of known estimated reserves. Eighty-six billion barrels, by the way, would provide a dozen years of America's oil without using any foreign oil at all, but our Minerals Management Service estimates that 80 percent of those reserves lie in areas already open for leasing and for drilling. So the big oil companies have already leased large areas that have the greatest potential for high production, and yet they're producing on less than one quarter of the already leased acre-

age. Ironically, that may be the best policy for the U.S. because America's problem is huge.

Our less than 5 percent of the planet's population consumes almost 25 percent of the oil produced in the world. We are so dependent on oil that we have limited leverage to reduce demand, but we have only 3 percent of the known oil reserves on the planet, and therefore, have very little leverage to increase the supply. Because exploration has been more thorough and extensive on our land and in our sovereign waters, the oil yet to be discovered on this planet lies not just predominantly but overwhelmingly beyond U.S. sovereignty.

The Bush-McCain solution is doomed to failure because, first, opening more land and waters to leasing will not necessarily lead to production. Second, even if it did, the production under the best circumstances of shallow waters and of easy drilling and infrastructure in place would take 5 and, more typically, 10 years to produce. Third, if we were foolish enough to pursue that policy, we would use all of our oil, economically recoverable, in about 20 years and would be totally at the mercy of unfriendly oil producers.

For America, the only certain solution to the high price of gasoline is to reduce the consumption of gasoline. Many of the big ways to do that require time to achieve, things like developing and switching to renewable energy, the research and development of fuel cell vehicles, living closer to work, building more extensive public transportation systems, replacing the whole vehicle fleet—both cars and trucks—with high fuel efficiency vehicles.

There are immediate ways we can cut the speculation now. We can drive slower. We can drive less. We can car-pool. We can use public transportation when it's possible. We can develop "work from home" wherever and whenever that's feasible as an option, and we need to start doing all of those immediate ways immediately.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 48 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

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AFTER RECESS

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

PRAYER

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

Lord God of infinite patience and mercy, at times a Member of this

Chamber may feel as a "voice crying in the wilderness." Representative of so many Americans, personal opinion often seems not to be heard in such a noisy and busy Nation such as ours. So, Lord, grant perseverance and consistency to Your servants who work in government day after day.

When their words seem to fall on desert land, help them to create a pool of conviction with others that the united effort may soon be recognized. When their efforts seem to be blown away by media winds or opinion polls, enable them to go deeper into where their convictions are rooted and affirm the life there.

In the depths where You breathe forth Your spirit, let them hear the echo of Your revelation and give You thanks and praise now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. PITTS 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.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 3180. An act to temporarily extend the programs under the Higher Education Act of 1965.

DEMOCRATS TAKE ACTION ON RECORD HIGH GAS PRICES AT THE PUMP

(Mr. ARCURI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ARCURI. Mr. Speaker, the American people are looking to Washington for help in reducing prices at the pump. They don't really have a lot of interest in pointing fingers; they just want us to act in a bipartisan fashion to bring these record prices down. But of course that hasn't stopped the oil company executives from pointing fingers, and of course that is what they do. That is all they can do. Anything but let the American people see where the real fault is, with the oil companies.

Last month, nonetheless, Congress acted in a strong bipartisan fashion to pressure the administration to temporarily suspend the filling of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve which experts agree will help drive down gasoline prices. This bipartisan House also overrode the Presidential veto on the new farm bill that makes an historic commitment to more affordable home-grown American biofuel and increased the oversight of commodity futures in order to detect and prevent market manipulation of energy prices.

Mr. Speaker, as this House prepares to debate more energy legislation this week, I hope we can work together to provide some relief at the pump.

ENERGY DEBATE IS NATIONAL SECURITY DEBATE

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, our energy policy is tied to our national security. When America is increasingly reliant on foreign sources of energy, we are increasingly influenced by foreign governments who may be hostile to our interests.

Too many Democrats in Congress believe the debate over energy independence is simply about the price at the pump. Some want to try to lower the price by socializing the oil industry or taxing American energy resources, neither of which will lower the price. Meanwhile, House Democrats refuse to expand exploration for American oil and natural gas. They fail to acknowledge that until we find affordable, reliable fuel sources to replace oil, our Nation will be reliant on this form of foreign energy.

When we invest in American resources, we not only add more supply to the market that has seen increased demand, we invest in our national security by ensuring more of our oil and natural resources come from right here at home.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11th.

HOLD THIS ADMINISTRATION ACCOUNTABLE

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KUCINICH. When the leadership of this House said back in October of 2006 that impeachment is off the table, what they did is they set the stage for the administration ignoring the subpoenas of the Congress for information. Once the administration understood that they did not have to comply with the law and that Congress essentially took away the one power that Congress has to compel the administration to respect Congress as a coequal branch of government, once that was taken away, the administration basically just decided it wasn't going to appear in front of Congress to answer questions, they wouldn't produce documents or papers that were relevant to congressional investigations.

Congress is a coequal branch of government. It is urgent that we reestablish our coequality, that we create conditions of a check and balance of administrative abuse of power. This isn't a Republican matter, it is not a Democratic matter, it is a matter for our country. We need to have the Congress be strong. We need to hold this administration accountable.

PUBLIC FEELS REPORTERS ARE BIASED

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, a new survey has found that 68 percent of all voters believe that reporters try to help their favorite candidate win elections. Just 17 percent believe that reporters offer unbiased coverage of election campaigns. And by more than a 3-1 margin, voters believe the media is behind Senator BARACK OBAMA rather than Senator JOHN MCCAIN.

The survey also found that 76 percent of voters believe the media have too much power and too much influence over elections. And skepticism about the media cuts across income, racial, gender, and age demographics.

Americans are right to be skeptical, and should brace themselves for the most one-sided coverage of a Presidential race that we have ever seen. We need to encourage the media to adhere to the highest standards of their profession. Only then can we restore Americans' faith in news reporting.

ENERGY FACTS VERSUS ENERGY FICTION

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

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, this morning I inaugurate energy facts versus energy fiction. Today's fact:

In the spring of 2001, Vice President CHENEY met with oil industry executives to develop a national energy policy. Then, before their policy was enacted the average price of a barrel of