

As the 110th Congress, we approach You as the source of all enlightenment for our endeavors, Father of Light. We look to You for the very best gift, the perfect gift to discern the present and prepare for the future.

Facing the concerns of the Nation, we look to You to guide, protect and elevate Your people. You do not take away our problems nor the conflicts of resolve. Instead, by our dealing with them, You draw from us a greater good and a lasting peace.

Because You have made us and in Your revealed love brought us to true freedom, we need not act as in the past, nor according to the dictates of others, or our own compulsions. As a free people, we can act anew and be creative enough to do what is proper for our times.

In America we can say: You are "God with us" 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.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. ALTMIRE 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.

DISPENSING WITH CALL OF PRIVATE CALENDAR ON TODAY

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the call of the Private Calendar be dispensed with today.

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

There was no objection.

NOTHING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE TRUTH

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

Mr. KUCINICH. This afternoon I will move to refer an Article of Impeachment to the Judiciary Committee.

People ask me, don't we have more important things to do? Think about this. This war has cost us our constitutionally guaranteed civil liberties. Is there something more important?

The Iraq war will eventually cost between two and \$3 trillion, meaning every American family will pay up-

wards of \$30,000 for this war. The war has contributed substantially to higher gas prices. Is there something more important?

Over 4,100 of our troops have died, and as many as 1 million innocent Iraqis have perished. Is there something more important?

There was never any proof that Iraq constituted an imminent threat to our national security, or that Iraq had the capability or intention of attacking the United States. Iraq had nothing to do with 9/11 or al Qaeda's role in 9/11. Yet Congress was led to believe otherwise.

The Bible says, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free." Congress must know the truth in order for our Nation to remain free. In a free Nation nothing is more important than the truth.

GOOD WAR—BAD WAR

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

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, successful counterterrorism programs teach that to win, you must attack both terrorists and their money. Through Congress' partisan lens, Iraq is the bad war, while Afghanistan is the good war. Our partisan lens will not recognize good news from Iraq or bad news from Afghanistan.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban is back, funded by billions from heroin. The U.N. reports that in 2008, Afghanistan is now also the top producer of hashish. Money from heroin and now hashish total hundreds of millions, if not billions.

In sum, the Taliban's drug profits now may equal the operations budget of General McKiernan and his NATO Army.

The hot issue today is a possible surge of troops to Afghanistan. I will sound a note of caution that without aerial spraying and other counterdrug programs that worked in Colombia, such an Afghan move will only accelerate violence between two very well-funded opponents.

To turn the rising Taliban tide, we must attack both heroin and hashish in the narco-state that is Afghanistan.

OFFSHORE DRILLING AND GAS PRICES

(Mrs. MALONEY of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the President announced that he is lifting the executive order that prevents Big Oil from drilling off of the treasured coastline of America.

What will this do to lower gas prices any time soon? Nothing. And nothing is exactly what the administration has been doing for the past 7 years as gas prices have nearly tripled.

By contrast, Democrats in Congress have been working on bringing down prices at the pump. We passed the first fuel efficiency standards in 32 years, and are supporting the movement to alternative fuels.

We want to help families now by releasing oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve and forcing big oil companies to start drilling on the 311 acres that are open for development now, or the 68 million acres that are under lease now for development.

Mr. Speaker, if domestic drilling can bring relief to American families, what are the big oil companies waiting for? Drill on those 311 acres and those 68 million acres under lease.

NATIONAL PAPERS FAVOR OBAMA

(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, the New York Times and the Washington Post are two influential national newspapers. Their articles are reprinted in hundreds of other publications, and television newscasts often repeat their stories.

I was curious how the Times and the Post were treating the two major party presidential candidates, so I looked at their front page coverage. The results may be of interest to voters who expect fair and objective reporting.

From June 28 through July 14, the papers wrote far more stories about Senator OBAMA than Senator MCCAIN. And while most of the 15 articles about Senator OBAMA were positive, not a single one of the nine articles about Senator MCCAIN was positive. That is a huge slant in favor of Senator OBAMA.

Surely voters deserve balanced coverage of the presidential candidates. And surely the media has a responsibility to provide it.

BRING DOWN PRICES AT THE PUMP TODAY

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

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, Americans everywhere are fed up with paying high gas prices. For 8 days, Americans have been asking President Bush to release oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, a move that has brought down prices at the pump in the past. But the President continues to say no.

In 1990, when the President's father withdrew oil from the reserve, the impact on prices was immediate, and they dropped 33 percent in 2 days. In 2000, President Clinton did the same, and prices fell before oil even hit the market. And in 2005, when this President Bush made the move, the price of oil dropped again.

Now the White House claims it won't lower prices but history proves that action to release oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve provides immediate relief to American consumers.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the pain our families are experiencing at the pump and in the economy today, there is simply no time to wait. Action is needed now, and we call on President Bush to stand up for consumers and utilize the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

LIFT CONGRESSIONAL BAN ON ENERGY EXPLORATION

(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, yesterday President Bush announced that he would be lifting the executive branch moratorium on offshore exploration for oil and natural gas. I applaud the President's actions.

House Republicans have offered a plan to expand offshore and onshore energy supply with conservation. This is part of our comprehensive approach to lowering energy prices and reducing our dependence on foreign oil.

I hope my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will join House Republicans and the American people in calling for an immediate lifting of the congressional ban on offshore drilling.

We need to invest in future alternatives to oil, but until we find a viable, affordable alternative energy source that can move our cars and transport American commerce, we need to expand exploration of American-made oil and natural gas, particularly when we have the tools and know how to do it in an environmentally sound way.

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

FORECLOSURES

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

Mr. CARDOZA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my concern for the devastating toll the housing crisis is taking on the neighborhoods of my district and throughout the country.

A report issued this week identified three cities in my district as having the highest rates of foreclosure in the entire Nation. In Stockton, Merced and Modesto, California, families are struggling to make increasing mortgage payments. Homeowners have lost over 40 percent of their homes' equity and communities are burdened with vacant, deteriorating housing. These vacant properties lower home values, attract vandalism and pests and contribute to overall neighborhood decline, as well as disrupting the family unit. At this rate, my district and communities across the country will be recovering from the foreclosure epidemic for years to come.

Borrowers and lenders have a duty to their country to help us overcome this housing crisis. Homeowners should try

to work with banks instead of abandoning their homes. And financial institutions must restructure mortgages whenever feasible.

During the Great Depression, families and banks worked together to help America through these tough times. I urge us to get back to that attitude.

PUT THE PLAN IN MOTION AND PASS ENERGY LEGISLATION

(Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, American families have been bracing from an energy problem for the past few months which has turned into an energy crisis. I have heard constituents loud and clear about their concern that leaders in D.C. were not listening. I heard their voices, and my Republican colleagues and I continued to come to the floor and ask the Democrat majority for their energy plan.

When our floor speeches were continuously met with silence in the absence of a Democrat energy plan, I too began to wonder if our leaders were listening.

Thankfully, the problem was recognized and addressed by our executive branch of government. I applaud President Bush's decision yesterday to lift the Federal moratorium on offshore drilling. Congress needs to move swiftly to pass legislation to implement this now that the President has decided to lift the ban. Let's work quickly together and efficiently to craft and pass legislation that will work toward providing short-term and long-term solutions. It is up to us now, as Members of Congress, to do what is right for the citizens, to put the plan in motion, and pass energy legislation.

REDUCE THE PRICE OF GAS NOW

(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, I have finally figured it out. I have finally figured out why this administration and many of its Republican allies refuse to release oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve and all they want to do is drill, drill, drill. I've figured it out.

Every time oil has been released from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, the price of oil has fallen, each and every time. This administration has refused our demands that it do the same now, when we are in an emergency and has said, I would rather drill.

But its own Department of Energy analysis said, and I quote, "Drilling would not have a significant impact on domestic crude oil and natural gas production or prices before 2030."

I figured it out. In 8 years, this administration has enabled oil company profits to go from \$39 billion to \$116 bil-

lion. Think about what those profits will go to in the next 22 years. That is what this is about.

This administration wants to give oil companies more time to reap larger profits, and refuse to give the American people the price relief they need by releasing oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve and reducing the price of gas now.

COMPREHENSIVE ENERGY REFORM

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

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, President Bush's action yesterday to lift the ban on Outer Continental Shelf drilling is an important step towards a comprehensive energy plan that the American public is demanding from Congress.

Many other countries, including China, Brazil and India allow similar exploration off their coastlines. With an estimated 86 billion barrels of oil and 420 trillion cubic feet of natural gas off our own coastline, it is only logical that the United States allow similar action.

But as we know, there is no one single fix for our energy crisis. Congress must act and enact a comprehensive energy reform plan that encompasses alternative and renewable energy, in addition to the recovery and refinement of our own domestic resources, all while expanding our conservation efforts.

Our constituents have made it clear that this is the type of comprehensive energy reform they want, and we must give it to them.

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SUPPORT COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

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

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I speak on behalf of immigrants. In the midst of our energy crisis, gas prices, and housing crisis in the United States, there are those who continue to positively contribute to our economy. Immigrants throughout history have come to this Nation with a hunger for success in the American dream, to provide for a family, and have their kids obtain an education. And many of them are working two to three different jobs contributing to our country at stores, restaurants, and gas stations.

Immigrants often live near their establishments, are avid sponsors for local Little League, soccer, schools, and churches. Our country has always welcomed immigrants. Let's remember that we need comprehensive immigration reform for those who positively contribute to our local communities.

I urge my colleagues to support comprehensive immigration reform.