

is generated by the drilling that's done off of our own coast. It doesn't start until 2017. Their bill takes that away.

Why is that significant to States like Louisiana? Number one, it's a huge disincentive for anybody to want to drill. If a State that doesn't drill at all, like Florida, now wants to start looking at drilling, which they do, this takes away their incentive. We use those revenues in Louisiana. It's dedicated in our constitution to rebuilding our vanishing coast. That's our barrier against future hurricanes. Why would the Democratic leadership want to take away our ability to have revenue sharing that we will use to restore our coast and put our hurricane barrier back in place in Louisiana?

They don't do anything on oil shale revenue sharing. They don't do anything on the lawsuit abuses. Right now, lawsuits by radical environmental groups take up about a third of the time it takes to bring oil to market. They don't do anything on nuclear, to encourage more nuclear power, like in France. France uses 80 percent nuclear power for their energy in their homes. There's nothing in this bill to encourage and remove those barriers on nuclear.

So, clearly, OPEC could not have drafted a better bill than the bill that the radical environmentalists/liberals filed today. I would encourage a "no" vote.

A COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL ENERGY POLICY WILL LEAD TO A BETTER FUTURE

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

Mr. KAGEN. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

To solve our crippling crisis of impossible gas prices that are now over \$4 per gallon in Wisconsin, we need a comprehensive national energy policy and strategy. And we need leaders who are on our side—not Big Oil. But where is the administration's plan? You see it at the gas station at the corner every day.

This crisis was totally predictable and, unfortunately, it is forcing every family, every business, and governments at every level to operate in a perpetual state of crisis planning. In fact, today's impossible gas prices are threatening the survival of major manufacturers and small businesses alike, even as ongoing speculation in oil futures remains unrestrained. The truth is there is no shortage of fuel. We just don't have the money in our pockets to pay for the energy we need.

There is a better way of doing things in America. Although alternative energies will not be available to meet our needs for a number of years, we cannot just wait any longer to make plans for our energy independence. We need to start producing more of our own energy right here and right now. If we want to keep more of our money here

at home, support the U.S. economy and provide American jobs, then we must produce more of our own oil and natural gas as well.

It's time to say "no" to the campaign cash handed out by big oil corporations to lobbyists and other special interests here in Washington. The first priority is to stop pointing fingers and instead start joining hands across the aisle.

Let's begin to work together and develop a comprehensive energy plan, a plan that is created not behind closed doors, but right here on the House floor, right here in the open.

For months, I have been advocating a three-point policy plan. First, we do have to drill for new oil and natural gas here in America. Our Nation has substantial untapped oil reserves, both under Federal land already leased to oil companies and offshore in U.S. territories. With appropriate safeguards, like giving States the right to decide if they will allow drilling off their shores, these reserves should be drilled and the oil extracted from them, which is our own oil, should be sold to Americans first.

Second, we must invest in every form of renewable energy available, whether it be solar, wind, geothermal, and even the new nuclear technologies. We have to invest our money here at home in renewable energy.

Washington's role should include promoting millions of new jobs with the tax incentives for United States companies to invest in this new technology.

Third, we must prevent price manipulation everywhere in the world. Stopping the unfair speculation in the oil market can immediately lower the price of gas at the pump and provide families and small businesses with immediate relief.

Also, I have called on the President and his allies time and time again to sell a portion of our Strategic Petroleum Reserve, which would immediately drop the price at the pump.

These three steps are fundamental to the success of an independent energy future for America, and they will create millions of new jobs.

In the coming days, Congress will take up a comprehensive package that will provide relief for consumers, will end our dependence on foreign oil, and create millions of new jobs and grow our economy. We must promote energy efficiency and invest in renewable sources of energy. We must responsibly increase domestic supplies, and without taxpayer subsidies to oil companies. It is my hope that this will be a bipartisan energy bill that will address all of these concerns.

I look forward to joining with my Democratic and Republican colleagues right here in Congress to try a different approach, something that will work. Let's try working together for a change, and find a legislative solution. It will require compromise. And in the legislative process, that is how business gets done.

None of this will be easy, and some of it won't be quick. But the time is right to craft a national energy policy that allows working families in Wisconsin to spend less of their money padding the bank accounts of oil executives, and more of their money on their own families.

By working together, we really will build a better future, and an energy independent future for all of us.

ENERGY PRICES RISING

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

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, our Nation is suffering. While many citizens are living paycheck to paycheck, energy prices have been rising, affecting the daily lives of Americans, getting to their jobs, getting children to school, and causing the cost of goods to increase significantly due to rising transportation costs. Rising energy costs affect individuals, families, and businesses, both large and small.

We must gain control of energy prices, and must do so in a reasonable and rational manner, with an eye toward the future and a plan which accomplishes energy independence while respecting our environment and providing real relief to individuals, not promoting yet another program that benefits Big Oil, at the expense of the taxpayer.

There are very real differences between Democrats and Republicans when we talk about energy issues. We are in the mess we are in now because the interests of Big Oil have, for far too long, been given priority over the needs of our citizens. Big Oil has reaped the rewards. Even now, while Americans struggle for ways they can reduce their individual energy consumption, ways they can survive while the price of gasoline, home energy costs, groceries, indeed almost everything has outstripped their income, the Republicans are touting a plan that, according to yesterday's and today's New York Times editorials, would do little to increase the supply or reduce the price of oil.

The New York Times editorial: "It would do little to increase the supply or reduce the price of oil. Oil companies already have access to nearly 80 percent of all American offshore oil that is technically recoverable. This bill would probably open up less than half of the remaining 20 percent, amounting to approximately two-thirds of 1 percent of all globally recoverable sources. The Department of Energy has already stated that the effect on prices would be insignificant."

The very party which has led us down this path of dependence on Big Oil, that has repeatedly squelched innovation and interest in renewable resources and alternative forms of energy, now wishes to save us with the simple mantra: Drill, baby, drill.

According to another New York Times op-ed published yesterday, drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and from currently restricted offshore sites could translate into an extra million barrels of oil a day in the year 2025. That is 17 years from now, Madam Speaker. Please note that. An extra million barrels in 2008 or 2009? No. 2025.

Sure, it takes time to make real change. But 17 years from now we can expect the Republican fix to result in lowering the price of crude by only 1.3 percent. So the party of Bush and CHENEY, the party of Big Oil, the party that Texas gave us, is going to fix the situation they have created just 17 years from now, and with a 1.3 percent cut. In the meantime, Big Oil's profits will continue to rise.

The Republican record on energy programs which have helped Americans is poor indeed. Let's look at the facts and decide if we need another Republican energy plan.

According to the Energy Information Administration, the price of gas is now \$3.65, up from \$1.46 when President Bush took office. A 150 percent increase. The price of gas was \$2.29 when Republicans adopted their energy plan. Today, it's a 59 percent increase. \$3.65.

Republican energy policies have resulted in record profits for oil companies. The five largest companies have posted profits of \$556 billion from 2001 to 2007, including \$123 billion in 2007 alone. Yet, Republicans have voted against nearly every energy initiative brought to the House floor.

Madam Speaker, I submit to you we must do everything we can, and examine every option in our efforts to help American citizens and to change our energy culture. Yes, we must look at drilling, but we need to be responsible in our approach and ensure that we are making decisions that actually achieve our goals, and our goals must be to help the taxpayers, not the oil corporations.

We must look at alternative forms of energy, we must look at renewable energy, we must look at every aspect of energy consumption before we act. There are real differences here, and I hope Congress will do the heavy lifting and make the difficult choices necessary to do what is right for the American people.

It's long past the time for rhetoric. It's time to tackle this real challenge and come up with real solutions, not short-term fixes, which will lead the American public, once again, footing the bill for Big Oil.

Madam Speaker, today the New York Times had another editorial. The New York Times' independent observations:

"Voters are furious at high gas prices. Republicans are happily pandering at their anger. Congress has sensibly renewed the moratorium each year for the last 26. Unfortunately, these are not sensible times, which means that congressional Democrats, particularly House Speaker NANCY

PELOSI, must try hard to make the best of a bad situation. The situation, briefly, is this: The Republicans have been bludgeoning the Democrats with the claim that Democrat opposition to offshore drilling is to blame for high fuel prices and that drilling is the answer, or one answer, to the country's dependence on foreign oil. We find it hard to imagine that they really believe what they say. Drilling will have no impact on fuel prices for at least 15 years, if then, and any number of efficiency measures will do more to reduce the country's dependence than drilling for America's modest offshore reserves. But the chant of drill, baby, drill, is playing far too well. Ms. PELOSI's compromise deserves support."

STAND UP AND BE COUNTED

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

Mr. BURGESS. Before I came to the United States Congress, in another life, I was a physician, and oftentimes when I was introduced to speak at an engagement back home, the person doing the introductions will say, Do you want to be referred to as Doctor or Congressman? I usually start off with perhaps a little lighthearted humor in that, Well, physicians still enjoy about a 70 to 80 percent approval rating with the American public, and Members of Congress enjoy about a 7 to 8 percent approval rating with the country. So, mother always called me Doctor, and that is what I'd prefer to be called. But it's really a sad commentary on the institution that our credibility is at such a low ebb.

Now we just had the gentleman from Tennessee talk about an editorial in the New York Times. Since he brought it up, let me refer attention to the New York Times from yesterday. Reading it on the airplane up here, they referenced the fact that we have a serious problem with the chairman of our Ways and Means Committee and the credibility has been lost for the individual who is head of the largest tax-writing body in the House of Representatives.

The Tax Code in this country is complex. No one understands it. People understand how mistakes can be made. But the chairman of that body, at the very least, ought to hold himself above reproach. And yes, maybe one transgression, perhaps two, but transgression after transgression after transgression is more than the American people can tolerate.

We are going to debate an energy bill today. But the fact is we are not really going to accomplish anything on energy. Yes, I know they have the votes. They can pass pretty much whatever they want. They can ram it to the floor, like they did last night, 15 minutes before it goes to the Rules Committee, and then here on the floor, as if by magic, today. But this bill is dead on arrival in the Senate. It is going to

do nothing to help the American people.

Here's the tragedy. Out in the countryside, no one believes that we have the ability to do much of anything. We couldn't talk about border security or immigration reform because we have no credibility. We can't talk about what we are going to do with the economy because we have no credibility.

The credibility of this institution was badly damaged prior to the 2006 election, and I grant you it was an election strategy by the other side that worked. Paint the working majority at that time as one that wasn't working, and we will get to take credit for it and we will get to take power.

So look at where we are today, 22½ months later. Are we out of Iraq? I don't think so. Are gas prices lower? I don't think so. All of those things were promised during the run-up to the last election. And, yes, they promised to be the most ethical and competent Congress that the country had seen in quite some time.

Now I call on the 30 new Members on the majority side who were elected on this platform to stand up. Stand up in your conference and be counted. Now is the time. We have a serious crisis of credibility on one of the major committees in the United States Congress, and we can't get past that point. One individual holds in his hand the power to begin to restore some of the credibility to the institution that we so sorely need.

I call on the freshmen Democrats to ask the chairman to step aside, whether temporarily or permanently, but step aside until he solves his own problems so that the institution is not left carrying that weight. I think the institution of the House of Representatives deserves no less than that courtesy at a time when our economy is suffering, our energy prices are high, and certainly the ability of the country to defend the border has been seriously questioned. This is the time.

This is the time that the House needs to have maximum credibility to get these issues accomplished and, at the same time, here we are talking about the same things and over and over again.

Again, I call on the freshmen Members, stand up to your Speaker, stand up to the powerful committee chairmen. Let's move past this point. You have other capable members on the majority side on the Committee on Ways and Means who can serve, either temporarily or permanently, to serve that body, and let's move past this point.

It's time. The American people are waiting on us to do the big work, and we can't do it because we are bound up in these seemingly endless quandaries that we find ourselves in. Let's show the American people that we can lead. Maybe then they will restore some of the credibility to us.