

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.

THE COST OF ENERGY

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

Mr. WAMP. Madam Speaker, over the last 14 years that I have had the privilege to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives, I have tried not to be excessively partisan. Frankly, having grown up a Democrat and become a Republican during the Reagan movement in this country, I feel like neither party has an exclusive on integrity, neither party has an exclusive on ideas.

But I feel compelled, Madam Speaker, to come to the floor today to say that one issue right now is burning in the American public like no other issue, and that is the cost of energy. This morning, the economy is sliding rapidly downward, primarily because of energy.

Now there's talk in the House here and in the Congress of a second stimulus bill that includes a variety of things that the new majority, the Democrat majority, has cobbled together. But the most important thing we could do for the American economy is to pass the American Energy Act, which is the Republican bill that opens up all of our oil and gas resources in this country. That is the most important thing we could do for the economy. For jobs and productivity and exports and standing our country back up economically, it is the most important thing.

Yet today it's going to be suppressed again because the Democratic energy alternative is a very limited, watered-down effort, designed, honestly, to just give some of their members a vote so they can say, Oh, we voted to drill a little bit and go home to campaign. Yet their idea of economic stimulus is going to be more government, more spending, more borrowed money, and it's really unfortunate.

It's really unfortunate because the most important thing we could do is just pass this robust energy bill, and in our bill we share the revenues with the States that opt in, that want to have Outer Continental Shelf oil and gas exploration in the zone where the oil and gas is, in the Gulf or off the West Coast, this resource that's been locked up for a long period of time, that we now know has to be unlocked, and Hurricane Ike was another reminder over the weekend that we need to diversify our supply, increase our supply, and have a robust approach to this, and not a very limited approach.

I will tell you where the problem lies. The American people are really frustrated. I have local officials calling me every day, angry, because the people they represent don't have anywhere to turn. Gas in east Tennessee was \$4.99 a gallon this weekend. People on fixed incomes are hurting and hurting and hurting and they wonder what the heck is going on in Congress and how is this happening. I have got to tell you, it's called extremism.

Now environmentalism is a good thing if it's a responsible, logical, com-

monsense resource management idea. It's a good thing. But extreme environmentalism is the problem. Extreme environmentalism has locked up our energy resources for a long period of time. And these Sierra Club types lobby the Congress and they score these Members and they say, If you don't vote with us all the time, you're somehow a radical person in the back pockets of oil and gas, and all this. Let me tell you, they're extreme.

On every new permit in this country, every single one for oil and gas exploration, they have immediately filed a lawsuit to tie it up in court, and they have got an unlimited supply of lawyers to sue to keep us from bringing any new oil and gas resources on the market. That is a huge problem. It's called extremism in the environmental community.

For years and years, they have been lobbying this place, and I have been here, and I have seen it. Now it's come home to roost. These are our problems.

Today, we need to give the Republicans a vote on the American Energy Act today in the House, and let's unleash the economy again and lower the cost of energy before it's too late, guys.

Ladies and gentlemen of the House, this is an important day. It's not about politics, it's about the people we represent and the fact they have nowhere else to turn. We need action. We need it today. This is not a partisan thing. There are really responsible people on both sides of the aisle that need to come together. And the liberals from San Francisco don't need to govern national policy.

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 44 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

□ 1000

AFTER RECESS

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

PRAYER

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

Lord God of creation and reconciliation, called to address the effects of the hurricane season upon the Nation, we must also face honestly the economic fractures of the present moment. Monetary matters, just as natural disasters, call us to be people of faith, hope and love.

The biblical vision of creation, covenant and community summons people to stand strong and together in a time of tension between promise and fulfillment. Positioned here by You, we com-

mit ourselves to solidarity with those suffering the most from hurricane and from economic situations. The ordinary laborer cannot distance himself from the speculative investor. All are frightened by the shaken terrain, and all must find new ground where they can stand together.

As people of the covenant, Lord, we can confront those attitudes and ways of acting which institutionalize injustice even when they are discovered within our very selves. For our quest for economic and social justice arises from faith, is sustained by hope, and seeks to heal a broken world that still seeks Your lasting justice and loving kindness. Be 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.

Mr. PENCE. 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 ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

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

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. GINGREY 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 agrees to the amendment of the House to the bill (S. 2135) "An Act to prohibit the recruitment or use of child soldiers, to designate persons who recruit or use child soldiers as inadmissible aliens, to allow the deportation of persons who recruit or use child soldiers, and for other purposes."