

Energy Secretary Steven Chu stated: "Somehow we have to figure out how to boost the price of gasoline to the levels in Europe."

Well, Madam Speaker, at the time of that statement, gasoline prices in Europe were \$8 to \$10 a gallon. Last week, the Energy Secretary made headlines when he seemed to say the administration's goal was not to lower gas prices. Considering the goal is not to lower gas prices, this may be the first time that the administration's energy policies match its rhetoric.

Now, despite the President's rhetoric about the need for increased domestic production of fossil fuels, to date, this administration has seemingly done everything it can to block production. But the purpose of these remarks is to highlight not the administration's statements but, instead, their policies.

Let's look at the record, starting with some positive things that happened just before President Obama took office and continuing through 2012 to present day, as shown on this graph.

First of all, July of 2008, at the peak of the 2008 gas price spike, President George Bush removed 18 years of Presidential Executive Orders restricting offshore oil and gas energy development. Prices began to fall immediately, almost overnight. Given the fact that not one additional barrel of oil was drilled, it was a message to the market, a strong message to the market that America finally recognized that the American taxpayers owned assets in oil and were willing to use them. What a message to the market it would be today, a similar message. But back in 2008, that's where we saw this drop begin to start.

Now, in September of 2008, just a couple of months later, Congress finally followed, after its 26-year ban on offshore drilling, to allow that to expire. Prices at the pump, as you can see, Madam Speaker, dropped dramatically, even more.

Then President Obama took office. February 2009, soon after, not long after inauguration, the administration rescinded oil shale lease plans put in place during the Bush administration to aid the production of oil in U.S. Government lands. These are lands that are owned by Federal taxpayers. President Obama's actions reduced production of oil in the United States Government lands, and we see what continues to happen with prices.

In June of 2010, the House Democrats passed a cap-and-trade national energy tax, which would have dramatically increased gasoline prices.

In November of 2009, the administration unilaterally shortened lease terms on some Outer Continental Shelf leases. Well, this policy not only discouraged oil and natural gas production, but also decreased much needed government revenues.

□ 1020

In March of 2010, the administration canceled the remaining lease sales in

seas off the Alaska coast, eliminating development of reserves that the government estimates could be as large as 65 billion barrels of oil.

In May of 2010, the administration canceled the Virginia offshore lease sale, which had bipartisan support from the Virginia Governor and the Virginia congressional delegation. The administration also canceled the remaining 2010 Gulf of Mexico lease sales.

In December of 2010, the administration extended the moratorium on leasing off the Atlantic and eastern Gulf of Mexico through 2017.

In January 2012, President Obama rejected the Keystone XL pipeline. Estimates show that the Keystone XL pipeline would add 1.1 million barrels a day of friendly Canadian oil to our Gulf of Mexico refineries.

Madam Speaker, moving forward with a credible energy policy can only be achieved if we all have a shared understanding of the facts. Global demand for oil is increasingly driven by developing economies such as China and India. In the U.S., our demand is down 6 percent year after year, and prices are still skyrocketing. And it's going to stay that way.

Eighty-five percent of the world's energy consumption comes from hydrocarbons—oil, coal, and natural gas. While renewable energy is needed and new consumption efficiencies should be encouraged to meet future energy demands, hydrocarbons will be the dominant source of fuel for the world's economy for many decades to come. No one can deny that before we can create an energy supply that is substantially more diversified, we are going to need more fossil fuels to get us there.

We're not running out of Natural Gas. In 2000, shale gas represented just 1 percent of American natural gas supplies. Today, it is 30 percent and rising.

We are not running out of oil. Former CEO of Shell, John Hoffmeister, stated last week on State of the Union, "We use 20 million barrels a day every day in a full economy in this country. We only produce 7. We used to produce 10. Let's go back to 10. We know how to produce 10. We have the oil to produce 10 for decades to come."

Unfortunately, this Administration is preventing the U.S. from developing additional energy supplies to meet our demand. As a result, families are struggling with rising energy costs and higher gas prices at the pump.

Madam Speaker, these are the facts and the solutions are within our reach.

STOP BEING ACCESSORIES TO CRIME

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

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, I came here to speak about a topic which I will address shortly, but I couldn't not take the moment to reflect on the passing of a great man who served in this Chamber since 1989, Representative DONALD PAYNE of New Jersey, who passed away this morning. Representative PAYNE

sat in this section, was a quiet, righteous, courageous man with whom I had the good fortune to travel at the request of and sponsorship of CARE and the Gates Foundation to Rwanda and to the Congo last August.

He cared about children greatly. He cared about education. He cared about people, and was very upset some years back when Don Imus, the radio shock jock, said some wrongful things about the Rutgers women's basketball team that cost Mr. Imus his position. And that brings me to what I was going to speak about today.

Yesterday, I mentioned that I slept well on my Sleep Number bed, and I slept well on my Sleep Number bed last night because they canceled their advertising on the Rush Limbaugh show. I mentioned that advertisers are accessories to the crime when radio people go too far and destroy someone's character, or try to, and make libelous statements. Limbaugh did that when he called Sandra Fluke some names, said she did some things or whatever, that were wrong, totally wrong.

Eleven advertisers have pulled their advertising because they don't want to, in the future, be accessories to such conduct. Talk radio has gone way over the top in this country, doing anything for ratings and money.

It came to my attention that two radio stations have dropped Rush Limbaugh, and it's not just advertisers but it's radio stations that are accessories to the fact of this type of crime. It's not like we don't know it's coming because it's been out there for people to see for years, and they've sat by as this type of lies and hateful speech and wrongful speech has taken place on the radio, Rush Limbaugh being the main violator of people's rights.

I decided last night in my elections to come—and I've got a primary and a general—I've always bought billboard advertising, and Clear Channel almost has a monopoly in my city on billboards, and they have Rush Limbaugh on their network, that until they drop Rush Limbaugh, I'm not going to buy billboards for my campaign.

I'm also going to discontinue radio advertising on Clear Channel, which I've done in the past. It might hurt me a little bit politically, but it's the right thing to do. That type of conduct should not be advanced on the airwaves that are supposed to be for the public good. It's interesting to note that Don Imus' comments were about women, and Rush Limbaugh's comments are about women. It seems to be fair game sometimes for men on radio to take on women and cast aspersions.

Don Imus learned his lesson, and he said that Rush Limbaugh's apology was inadequate and weak and cowardly, and indeed it was. He hasn't called the lady. He hasn't come to Georgetown University and made amends to all those women whose character he impugned in misogynist statements, and he hasn't given a proper apology. He said he used inappropriate

words. He was on an inappropriate topic. And Mitt Romney certainly didn't rise to the occasion when he said they weren't the words he would have used. It wasn't an area that anybody should have brought up or even thought about.

Limbaugh said that the woman wanted to be paid for sex because she, in his thoughts, wanted contraception so she could have sex without the fear of pregnancy. It's funny, Rush Limbaugh never questioned anybody getting a vasectomy, for what's the use of a vasectomy, that's covered by insurance, but to have sex without the fear or possibility of pregnancy. He said because she wanted sex paid for by the taxpayers that he ought to be able to watch it. Well, I wonder if he wants to watch all the men who had vasectomies have their sex.

There's something wrong in the country, and the advertisers and the radio stations are responsible, and they need to take appropriate moral and ethical action and not continue to be accessories to the fact and support such trash.

CONTINUING IRANIAN THREAT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. ADAMS) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. ADAMS. Madam Speaker, I come to the floor today to speak about the continuing Iranian threat to the United States and Israel.

Just as the President of Iran continues to spew his vile poison into the civil discourse of the United Nations, the regime of the Ayatollah issued a threat of violent aggression 2 weeks ago against Israel through the deputy head of the armed forces.

Through its actions, Iran has proven that it will never work with the peaceful nations of the world community. In fact, in yet another affront to diplomacy, Iran recently offered to allow inspectors from the IAEA into the country only to refuse them entry into the most important facilities to examine those nuclear sites in dispute.

The threat of a nuclear-armed Iran is not only a threat to Israel; it is also a direct threat to the United States and to the entire world community. Just this week, the chief of the International Atomic Energy Agency said there were unspecified activities at an Iranian military site which inspectors wanted to visit.

The Iranian regime has publicly threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz, a major shipping route for Middle Eastern nations to export oil and supply the world's energy needs. This threat by Iran amounts to economic warfare, as the closure of the Strait of Hormuz would trigger spikes in crude oil, gasoline bottlenecks in the supply chain, increased prices for all manufactured goods, and would likely lead to massive increases for gas here in the United States.

At a time when our domestic economy is struggling to recover, the last

thing hardworking Americans need is for gas prices to soar even higher.

While drastic reductions in the supply of crude oil would be devastating to the world economy, the threat of a theocratic, unstable Iranian regime bent on the destruction of Israel and its allies is even worse. A nuclear Iran will not care about economic sanctions. A nuclear Iran will not care about diplomacy. A nuclear Iran will not negotiate in good faith. And a nuclear Iran will not be a friend of the United States.

Perhaps the greatest threat to peace and security in the world is the refusal to heed the warnings of the most violent and dangerous regimes when they tell us what their exact intentions are. My hope is that it will not be a mistake of this Nation, one that this Nation makes with this regime in Tehran. Again, my hope is that it will not be our mistake not to pay attention to the signals from the regime in Tehran.

□ 1030

THE AGENCY FOR TOXIC SUBSTANCES AND DISEASE REGISTRY DRAFT REPORT ON VIEQUES, PUERTO RICO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. PIERLUISI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PIERLUISI. Madam Speaker, I rise to discuss a subject of great importance to me, to the people I represent, and to many of our fellow citizens around the country, and that is the health of nearly 10,000 residents of Vieques, Puerto Rico.

The people of Vieques sacrificed as much as, if not more than, any other U.S. civilian population to advance our military readiness. In the 1940s, the Federal Government expropriated lands on Vieques for use by the Navy. For over 60 years, the Navy conducted training operations on eastern Vieques, including ship-to-shore bombing, aerial bombing, and ground-based exercises. The Navy has reported that it dropped between 3 and 4 million pounds of ordnance on Vieques each year between 1983 and 1998.

Training operations on Vieques ceased in 2003, in part due to concerns about the risks to safety, health, and the environment posed by decades of weapons use. The Navy is now administering the cleanup of Vieques with support from other Federal and local agencies. In 2005, the EPA listed Vieques as one of the most hazardous sites in the U.S. To date, over 35,000 munitions on Vieques have been recovered and destroyed, including at least 19,000 live munitions.

Unfortunately, numerous studies have shown that residents of Vieques have higher rates of cancer and other chronic illnesses than residents of mainland Puerto Rico, raising serious questions about whether there may be a link between those health problems

and the island's long use as a military training range.

In December, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, an agency within HHS, released a draft report that addresses whether there is evidence of a causal relationship between the identified health problems and the Navy's activities. ATSDR examined five "pathways" through which residents of Vieques might have been exposed to harmful contaminants: air, soil, fish, local produce and livestock, and drinking water. The conclusion reached by ATSDR in its draft report is generally the same as the conclusion reached by the agency in a series of controversial public health assessments it conducted on Vieques about a decade ago, specifically, that the available data does not establish that the contaminants in these pathways, some of which can be linked to military activities, were at levels expected to cause the reported health problems.

Because the draft report leaves many crucial questions unanswered, today I'm filing extensive comments that I urge ATSDR to address before its report is finalized. My comments are intended to be constructive, because my constituents deserve a meticulous evaluation of the draft report aimed at producing concrete action by the Federal Government.

In my comments, I note that ATSDR repeatedly acknowledges that its conclusions are not definitive, or even close to it, because the available data upon which the agency relies is incomplete in many respects. While ATSDR recommends that further studies be conducted to fill certain data gaps, the agency does not go far enough.

In 2009, ATSDR stated that it expected to recommend biomonitoring to determine whether, and to what extent, residents have been exposed to harmful chemicals. Yet, in a startling reversal, the agency has now stated that "it is not recommending a comprehensive, systematic biomonitoring effort at this time."

Given the health problems on Vieques and the potential link between those problems and military activities, such an action is misplaced. Therefore, I have urged ATSDR to recommend a comprehensive biomonitoring investigation. More generally, I have encouraged ATSDR and other Federal agencies, working in partnership with independent researchers, to take a more active and assertive role in designing, implementing, and especially funding the additional studies that are still needed to determine the nature and potential causes of the health problems being experienced by residents of Vieques.

It is unacceptable that more than a decade after ATSDR completed its first public health assessments on Vieques, fundamental questions about the safety of the island's environment and the health of its residents remain unanswered. My constituents deserve better.