

But, Mr. Speaker, we are here on a Saturday because they want to put politics before people. We have HMOs closing around this country. I had a gentleman write to me and said, "You all are debating whether I can sue an HMO. I have been dropped by my third HMO which went under."

Nursing homes are closing around this country, and the poor and elderly are being deprived of care because they want to put politics before people.

1145

It is sad, but I heard George W. Bush say the other day it is sort of a fitting end to the close of an era of contentiousness, an era of disgrace; that they, the American people, I think, want to put behind them. It is sad that we are here now, and they are using this as a last stage putting people behind politics. It is not about LIHEAP, it is not about people freezing to death, it is about changing the direction of this country.

They had their chance. I heard the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TRAFICANT), a Democrat, say they had 48 years, not mentioning the last 8 years, and they blew it. This is not about LIHEAP. It is about changing the direction of this country. It is about other issues at the last minute, like putting provisions in at the last minute to provide amnesty to millions of illegal aliens.

I was offended today when I heard someone say that we did not know on the Republican side about immigration. My grandparents were immigrants and they came in legally to this country, not illegally, and they worked in the factories of this country and they toiled. But if we throw in this provision to allow millions, we have cast aside our laws. What good are our laws? We might just as well tear up our laws and throw them away.

What does it mean to be an American if the President can cast aside the very basis for immigration. What made this country great is people coming here legally under the laws. So this is not about LIHEAP, this is not about low-energy assistance, it is about other greater issues.

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a joint resolution of the House of the following title:

H.J. Res. 118. Joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2001, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 1761. An act to direct the Secretary of the Interior, through the Bureau of Reclamation, to conserve and enhance the water supplies of the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON H.R. 4577, DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2001

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to comment that it is interesting to note it was the Republicans first proposal, when they took charge here, to kill low-income energy assistance, the LIHEAP program.

Yes, it is about LIHEAP today and people being warm in this country, particularly in those areas of the country where it is cold, like the Northeast.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELAZQUEZ):

Ms. VELAZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from Connecticut for this motion. I rise in strong support of this motion.

I ask my colleagues, on behalf of millions of needy families, that we maintain the current funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, better known as LIHEAP. It is of critical importance to the families in my district and across the Nation.

Although current funding for the program is low, this conference report lowers it even further. I do not believe that any of my colleagues wants to be held responsible for a family or an elderly person living in the cold because they cannot afford heating this winter, especially in this prosperous country. The Republican majority has cut this program every year. While they are warm in their own homes they slash this program with cold hearts.

The purpose of LIHEAP is to help pay the winter heating bills of our most needy low-income and elderly individuals. Two-thirds make less than \$8,000 a year. They are the poorest of the poor. Last year, this program helped 4.4 million households. Mr. Speaker, we are not just talking about comfort here, we are talking about the health and sometimes even the lives of some of our citizens. The Boston City Hospital reports that the number of clinically underweight children increases dramatically following the coldest months, and we all know the tragic stories each year about some elderly person dying in an unheated home.

LIHEAP is most crucial during the peak winter heating season when high energy bills eat up to 30 percent of a family's budget. And this winter, heating oil prices are expected to rise 20 to 40 percent, consuming even more of the average budget. Without LIHEAP, many low-income families and elderly people will have to choose between heating their homes and paying for food, medicine, and rent. I rise in strong support of this motion.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire about the time that remains?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). The gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG) has 7 minutes remaining and the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) has 9½ minutes remaining and the right to close.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY).

Mr. HINCHEY. Mr. Speaker, I want to remind my friend, the gentleman from Florida who was here at the podium a few moments ago, that this issue is about energy policy and it is about people being cold and it is about people surviving this winter. That may not be true if one lives in Florida, but it is true for those living in New York or New Hampshire or Pennsylvania or Ohio or Wisconsin or Michigan. This is a critical issue for people in all those States. So it is important that we raise the level of LIHEAP funding.

I also want to express my appreciation to the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, because, earlier this month, I asked for a request of \$8 million to fund the continued operation of the President's initiated Northeast Home Heating Oil Reserve, which is now funded. But I also want to say a couple of things about energy policy in this country and who is directing it at this moment, because that policy is being directed by the oil companies.

The three largest oil firms are currently reporting quarterly profits that double last year's earnings. Leading the way was Exxon-Mobil, which 3 months ago posted the largest quarterly profits ever for a U.S. corporation. It beat that record just a couple of days ago with the announcement that it had earned \$4.3 billion in the third quarter. Chevron-Texaco, which announced last week that it will merge, and Conoco all reported that their profits have doubled just recently.

Exxon-Mobil's vice president is quoted as saying, "We've got a lot of cash around here. It's coming in pretty fast. Flying through the door." So while Americans are struggling trying to pay their home heating bills and the gasoline bills to get back and forth to work, the energy companies are racking up records profits.

The oil companies are not using their profits to invest in new oil and gas exploration, which would ultimately lead to lower prices, decreased dependence on foreign oil, and greater stability in the market. Instead, what they are doing is using the profits to repurchase their stocks so that they can raise the stock price.

We ought to have the Committee on Commerce convene immediate hearings on the outrageous profits of the oil companies. That is a responsibility that we place on the other side of the aisle. Immediate hearings to determine what is going on.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY).

(Mrs. LOWEY asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the motion to instruct conferees to provide full funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

Before I make a few points, I just want to agree with my colleague, the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY), and I would encourage the FTC