

that many people do not realize. For every BTU of energy that goes into the process of making ethanol, you get roughly 1.4 BTUs of energy back.

On the other hand, with gasoline, for every BTU that you put into the input cost into the manufacturing, you get eight-tenths of a BTU back. An MTBE which, of course, is a fuel additive, for every one unit of energy you get sixty-seven hundredths back.

Now the reason for that is that ethanol harnesses the energy of the sun, as corn grows. And so it is a net savings. And so a lot of good things about ethanol, a lot of things that are positive.

However, there are some things that have occurred here recently that are rather disturbing at the present time, and I think that this following chart pretty well illustrates this. We had assumed that since ethanol is made from corn, corn prices are low. In Nebraska recently, the price of a bushel of corn was \$1.54. And a good price would be maybe \$3 a bushel. So corn is very, very low right now. That is the primary ingredient to make ethanol.

We have heard about the refinery capacity being reduced. And that has been a problem that has caused gasoline prices to spike. But ethanol is not dependent, largely, upon the refinery industry.

Fifteen percent of E85 is gasoline. The other 85 percent is ethanol, which is made at an ethanol plant, which is really distributed mostly across the Midwest. So the hurricane had absolutely no effect on most of the cost of ethanol, and yet we find these things to be true.

On August 1 of 2005, in North Platte, Nebraska, the cost of E85, 85 percent ethanol, was just slightly under \$2; \$1.99 a gallon. In Lincoln, Nebraska it was \$2.04. So, pretty close; just a 5 cent spread.

However, by September 19, yesterday, that price had risen dramatically. North Platte was \$2.69 a gallon, which was a 70 cent increase. Lincoln, Nebraska was \$3.09, which was \$1.05.

Again, we understand that there is a shortage of fuel. We realize there are refinery problems. But ethanol should be pretty much insulated from those problems. So it is very difficult for those of us who are fairly close to that industry to understand how in the world we could see those kinds of increases in such a short period of time.

By the same token, the cost of unleaded fuel, with no ethanol in it, actually was cheaper in North Platte and Lincoln by 10 cents and 40 cents a gallon, and this is unheard of, because normally E85 should run 30, 40, 50, even 60 cents a gallon cheaper, because there is a 51-cent tax credit for ethanol because of the fact that it does rely primarily on corn, which is a domestically produced commodity.

So anyway, we are quite concerned about this. We have asked people to look into this. I believe that the Energy and Commerce Committee is will-

ing to take a look at it, the volatility of fuel prices and the fact that this is really very damaging to our economy.

It is very damaging to our farm economy, particularly, and they are the ones that produce the ethanol. So this is really something that is very puzzling and something that we are hoping that Congress, particularly the Energy and Commerce Committee, can get to the bottom of.

ANNIVERSARY OF ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, just over a year ago, Congress allowed the Federal ban on assault weapons to expire without a floor vote. The ban was allowed to die despite the support of two-thirds of the American people and the support of nearly every police organization in the country. And although he did nothing to help, President Bush even said he supported the ban. But Congress refused to listen to common sense and allowed weapons such as AK-47s and Tec-9s to be available throughout the United States.

Since then, the NRA and its allies in Congress have pursued a radical agenda to weaken our gun laws. In July, the other body passed legislation giving the gun industry unprecedented protections from negligent lawsuits. This legislation will see that negligence goes unpunished.

It will also give the industry no incentive to pursue safety innovations for their products. Had these protections been in place for the auto industry 40 years ago, cars would not have seat belts, air bags, antilock brakes.

The NRA says this law will prevent frivolous lawsuits against the gun industry. But it is a problem that does not exist. Over the past 10 years, over 10 million lawsuits have been filed in the United States. Only 57 have involved the gun industry. And only 12 of those have been ruled frivolous by judges.

The current system works. Frivolous lawsuit against the gun industry are not coming to trial. Also, the NRA has begun a lobbying campaign to convince State legislatures to overturn workplace gun laws. Whether it is at a day care center or school, church or hazardous material plant, the NRA wants employees to come to work armed.

Again, it defies common sense. Guns are already the third greatest hazard in the work field. Seventeen Americans die in the job because of guns each and every week. Instead of dismissing irresponsible business practices and allowing guns in day care centers, Congress should focus on legislation that keeps illegal guns out of the hands of criminals and terrorists.

We need to give gun law enforcement the tools to enforce current gun laws. According to the Department of Jus-

tice, only 2 percent of Federal gun crimes are enforced. I have introduced legislation to improve the National Instant Background Check System, or NICS, to make sure people who are not allowed to own guns cannot access them.

NICS is a database used to make sure potential gun buyers are legally permitted to own firearms. But the system is only as good as the information States provide. Twenty-five States have entered less than 60 percent of their felony convictions into the NICS database.

In 13 States, domestic violence restraining orders are not entered into the NICS system. My bill will require States and Federal agencies to provide the FBI with all relevant records necessary to conduct effective background checks.

The bill estimates a nationwide grant program to allow State law enforcement agencies to update and transmit records for inclusion into NICS.

Another step towards reducing the threat of gun violence is to include individuals on the Federal terrorist watch list in the NICS system. That individuals with known terrorist ties are allowed to buy guns, with no questions asked, represents a serious threat to our homeland security.

Earlier this year, the United States Government Accountability Office issued a report revealing 44 instances of persons listed on Federal terrorist watch lists attempting to purchase firearms from gun shows during a 4-month period in 2004. Thirty-five of these transactions resulted in a successful purchase of a firearm.

Our current law allows our enemies in the war on terror to arm themselves within our own borders. I have introduced legislation to place persons on the Transportation Security Administration's no-fly list into the NICS system. If we do not trust an individual to board a plane, common sense dictates that we should not allow them to buy guns.

Both sides of the gun issue have a vested interest in reducing gun violence. In 2002 alone, guns killed over 30,000 Americans. Each year, gun violence kills more of our children than cancer, pneumonia, asthma, AIDS, and the flu combined.

Studies show gun violence costs our health care system more than \$100 billion a year. Mr. Speaker, we must work together to achieve commonsense solutions to violence, without infringing on the second amendment rights of law-abiding citizens.

UNEQUAL TAXATION HURTS EDUCATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, in a prior existence, I spent eight terms in the Utah legislature and 28 years as a