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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CHOCOLA).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 23, 2006.

I hereby appoint the Honorable CHRIS CHOCOLA to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 31, 2006, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 25 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate extend beyond 9:50 a.m.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KELLER) for 2 minutes.

COMMENDING TOM DAVIS

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, today I am happy to welcome Tom Davis to Washington, DC. He has traveled here all the way from Spring, TX, to testify before the Subcommittee on 21st Century Competitiveness, which I chair. I invited him to talk about the ways that the private sector can help increase college access for millions of Americans.

Tom Davis is already doing his part. He is the owner of Davis Brothers Con-

struction, a company of about 35 employees that builds multi-family homes. Most of his employees are hourly laborers who make a decent living but can't afford to send their kids to college. So Mr. Davis has said that, for any of his employees whose children want to go to college but can't afford it, he will pay for their tuition and books. His generosity has built fierce loyalty among his employees, and he has already sent seven kids to college who otherwise couldn't have gone.

It is because of businesses like his that I introduced the Family Friendly Employers Act which gives a tax incentive to those employers who pay for their employees' children to go to college. Our country could use more family friendly employers like Tom Davis.

GAS PRICE GOUGING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 31, 2006, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Well, big surprise, the Bush Federal Trade Commission finds out there is no price gouging in the oil industry. No, none whatsoever. The oil men in the White House and the vice president, the oil man, their political appointees at the Federal Trade Commission finds no price gouging. The American people aren't going to believe this.

Now, let's just take one little example with Katrina. I live on the west coast of the United States; none of our oil refined products come from the southeastern United States, yet on Labor Day weekend in Oregon the prices were identical and they had gone up by 60 cents a gallon in one day. Now, isn't that interesting.

Now, how does that work? That is not price gouging? That is market-based? So they were going to build a

pipeline that day and start shipping it to the southeast, or they were going to truck it across the country? Come on. Totally separated markets. Unbelievable increase in profits. \$100 million a day for ExxonMobil, the most profitable day in the history of the world, and there was no price gouging going on.

Now, there is one commissioner who has a shred of integrity left, Commissioner John Leibowitz. He issued a sharp statement. He said a handful of refiners more than doubled operating margins in ways not attributable to increased costs after the hurricanes.

Sounds like price gouging to me. No, the entire Commission determined that the firm's conduct in response to hurricane-induced reductions was consistent with competition, adding that the Bush-appointed Federal Trade Commission doesn't back proposals to create Federal price gouging laws. There is no price gouging.

So then why wouldn't we create price gouging laws? If there isn't any, there hasn't been any, we could prevent it in the future. Or maybe there really was a little teeny bit of price gouging and the Bush appointees don't want us to be able to prosecute that in the future. I think we could substitute the word consistent with business as usual.

This is not a competitive market. There is collusion. It is organized. It has been going on for more than a decade when the American Petroleum Institute suggested to Big Oil that they shut down refineries to squeeze down capacity so that they could drive up refinery margins. And, guess what. On average they are up 255 percent in 5 years. Now, this is competition according to the Bush-appointed Federal Trade Commission. The rest of us might call it collusion, market manipulation, and price gouging. The American people are seeing it.

Now, if we took two simple steps. They say, oh, there is nothing Congress

This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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