

could do anyway, don't worry about it. That is what the President says. Yeah, there are a couple things we could do. The experts say that 75 percent of the crude oil market is unregulated. It is traded in ways that would be illegal if it was controlled by the Commodities Future Trading Commission, like all other commodities and a quarter of the oil market. Traders swap back and forth, back and forth, back and forth just to drive up the price, no intention of actually taking a contract or taking delivery. They say we could squeeze 20 to 25 percent out of today's cost at the pump if we just regulated that market with the same rules as any other traded commodity and part of the oil market today.

Well, that would take us from \$3.20 down to \$2.56 a gallon. Not bad. I think the American people and American businesses would think that was pretty good.

And then we have the collusion to shut the refineries. Now, if we just took the refineries back to their previous margins, that was the historic margin that they got per gallon, that would knock another 50 cents a gallon off. But let's say we have got to give them an inducement to reopen the refineries that they shut, or build new ones because they tore down the ones that they shut to restrict the market to drive up the price. So with a little windfall profits tax that says these are windfall profits unless and until you invest in production and refining capacity; and if you do that, then you won't have to pay this confiscatory tax, that would take us down to somewhere around \$2.26 a gallon. Now, that would be quite a gift for the American economy, American consumers, people who live in the rural parts of my district who have to commute long distances to work.

But the Republican Congress is silent and complicit with the oil men at the White House who have manipulated the Federal Trade Commission into trying to fool the American consumers and say, oh, that wasn't price gouging, that was a market at work.

Yeah. Give me a break.

DO-NOTHING CONGRESS FAILING THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, the Do-Nothing Congress of 1948 is about to be replaced as the most ineffective Congress in recent times. Today, just as in 1948, the American people are looking to Congress to tackle some very important issues: The war in Iraq, rising gas prices, rising college and health care costs, the economic uncertainty resulting from the outsourcing of high-paying American jobs, and a record deficit that continues to spiral out of control.

There is so much that this Congress could be working on right now, but House Republicans refuse to address any of these concerns. In fact, it is difficult to address the concerns of the American people when Congress is never in session.

I am sure the American people will be shocked to hear that this is only the 36th day the House is scheduled to hold votes this year. With only 57 scheduled voting days until adjournment, the House is now on track to meet 15 days less than the first Do-Nothing Congress of 1948. And it is no wonder the American people are so disgusted with Congress.

Mr. Speaker, the House Republican majority is simply out of new ideas. Any time that a crisis hits, they throw out the same old ideas that haven't worked for them in the past and will not work for them in the future. And let me give you a case in point. This week, House Republicans say they are finally ready to address the record gas prices Americans have been forced to pay every time they go to the gas station. So what is the new idea House Republicans will bring to the floor this week? Drilling in the Alaska wilderness, the area known as the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Well, that sounds familiar. That's right. You've heard it before. It's nothing new. And it will do absolutely nothing to help American consumers with the pain they now face at the pump. In fact, they wouldn't even be able to start drilling for oil out in this Alaska wilderness until a decade after Congress gives its approval. Worse yet, ANWR only holds enough oil to provide 6 months of oil to the American consumer. This is simply not an energy solution. It is the same old idea.

So then why do Washington Republicans choose to ignore the problem? Could it be that they have built such a cozy relationship with the CEOs of Big Oil that they are simply unwilling to break these bonds? Let's not forget that with two oil men in the White House and a rubber-stamp Republican Congress always ready to back them up, big oil companies have seen their profits quadruple in the past 4 years. At the same time the price of gasoline has doubled and our dependence on foreign oil has increased substantially.

As American families struggle to deal with falling wages and rising prices at the pump, the Republicans in this body continue to deliver billions of dollars in tax breaks to big oil companies.

Mr. Speaker, it is no wonder the American people are demanding change. They want results, and they aren't getting them from this Republican majority.

Unlike our Republican colleagues, House Democrats have offered some innovative and new ideas that are worth exploring. Last week, the Democratic Rural Working Group unveiled its ambitious plan to reduce our dependence on foreign petroleum and promote the

production and use of clean renewable energy here at home. In other words, promote the production and use of clean renewable energy here at home so we are not so dependent on foreign oil.

Our proposal, the Democratic proposal, provides tax incentives to encourage increased biofuels production, expands the ethanol and biodiesel pumps at gas stations, and increases the number of flex fuel vehicles on the road.

The Democrats have also introduced legislation that would rescind the tax breaks to big oil companies. At a time when they are breaking record profits every quarter, why should the Federal Government hand out tax breaks to these companies? We shouldn't. It is simply not fair.

As Americans prepare to travel this weekend for the Memorial Day holiday, they should know that Democrats are offering real solutions to high gas prices to protect the American consumer, not Big Oil.

Mr. Speaker, the American people are fed up with the Republican Do-Nothing Congress and are demanding change here in Washington, something that Republicans simply cannot deliver. It is time for fresh ideas. It is time for Democrats to take control of this House so that the needs of all Americans are once again addressed on this House floor rather than just the corporate interests such as Big Oil.

109TH CONGRESS HAS UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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

Mr. COOPER. Mr. Speaker, my colleague from New Jersey who just spoke is exactly right. This Congress, this year, this House of Representatives will probably meet fewer days, fewer hours than any Congress since 1948. President Harry Truman called that Congress the Do-Nothing Congress because it did almost nothing, and it only tried to work for about 110 days out of the whole year of 365 days. We will meet for substantially fewer days than the Do-Nothing Congress. So how do you do less than nothing? Sadly, the American public is about to find out.

Now, how does the schedule happen? Well, in the House of Representatives, it is set by the majority party. They can choose. They can make us work a long year or a short year, or a very short year as they have decided to do this year.

Now, why are we meeting for so few days? Well, it is not because taxpayers back home aren't paying us a full-time, full-year salary. We are making the same pay. But yet we are able to spend 9 or 10 months of the year back home in our districts. And I love that. My wife and kids are back home, I love

being home 4 or 5 days a week every week.

But I am worried about America, and I am worried that this House is not confronting the problems that America faces, because the workweek here in Congress is really too short to even be called a workweek. The normal congressional schedule, and this week is not a normal week, but the normal schedule is we come to Washington Tuesday afternoon for a few votes on Tuesday night; those are usually inconsequential votes such as, for example, renaming post offices. On Wednesday, sometimes there are some real votes, and sometimes on Thursday, usually Thursday morning. And then by Thursday afternoon our so-called workweek is over. Well, this is called the Tuesday-Thursday Club. I have been in Congress a number of years, there always was a Tuesday-Thursday club, but membership in that club used to be reserved for a few folks who happened to have congressional districts nearby in Virginia or Maryland, or, quite frankly, for some members who didn't really care about the job, who didn't want to attend all the hearings, who didn't want to participate in the debates, who didn't want to study the legislation and really face the problems that America faces.

Sadly, today, Mr. Speaker, pretty much everybody belongs to the Tuesday-Thursday Club. Because if you are here in Washington on Monday or Friday, you will discover that none of your colleagues are. No hearings are being held. No investigations are being conducted.

For example, the majority in their wisdom has abolished most all of the subcommittees that has the power to investigate because they simply do not want investigations to take place. Well, that is one of the primary functions of Congress, is to conduct what they call oversight. And that doesn't mean overlooking a problem. It means digging into a problem so you can find out exactly how taxpayer dollars are being spent.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are in this ironic situation with America confronting a myriad of problems, and here we are working less than any time in literally a half century, working less than any time since 1948.

It is time that this Congress got down to business to confront problems such as, for example, what my constituents back home want is an immigration bill. And the House passed one back last December. The Senate hopefully will pass one this week or next week. But then those two have to be reconciled into a bill that both Houses can support. With only a few days left in this entire session, how are we going to reconcile that legislation? Is it going to be a good bill when it is reconciled? The clock is ticking, Mr. Speaker. There is very little time left.

Let me mention one other issue that I think is of great concern to all Americans. If you have anyone in your fam-

ily who has been touched by the dread diseases of Parkinson's or Alzheimer's or diabetes or cancer or a stroke or heart disease, or any other of a myriad of diseases, you are probably interested, you are probably in strong support of embryonic stem cell research so that our brilliant scientists can try to discover cures for these dread diseases. The best information we have is that some 72 percent of the American people favor research in this area. They want it done. They want it done now. They want it done in America, too. They are not willing to outsource an entire area of scientific hope for our patients. But although this House passed a stem cell bill, the Senate has not, and we need action on that, because the House passed stem cells a year ago.

I see that my time is expired, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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 18 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. BASS) at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

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

With the words about Judith from the Hebrew scriptures, let us pray for each of the women who serve in our military forces:

"Strike up a song to our God. Let us sing a hymn of praise as we honor and call upon God's holy name.

"The Lord is our God who stamps out wars. Enemies have threatened us and set fire to our land. The young they have killed, and they have left us widows and orphans.

"Yet the Lord has fought back with a woman's hand. She took off her mourning cloak and has taken on a new beauty.

"Some were struck by her daring. Others stopped by her boldness. She has led her people with a shout of triumph, and the enemy became paralyzed with fear."

So let us sing a new hymn, in our day, to the Lord, for the strength of our God has been made known in the glory of this woman, 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.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia 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.

NEW IRAQI GOVERNMENT: SUCCESS

(Mr. PRICE of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and applaud the inauguration this past weekend of Iraq's new permanent unity government. For 3 years, democracy has been coming to Iraq, and now it is officially here.

Millions have participated in the process, voting and debating, and now the people of Iraq finally have their own sovereign, democratically elected government. The Iraqis have overcome huge obstacles, uncertainty, threats, violence and fear, but have continued to stand firm for the most noble of ideals, freedom and democracy.

In just 3 years, we have seen a tyrannical oppressive dictatorship removed and a fully sovereign democracy born. Their new government is one of unity with Kurds, Shiites and Sunnis all serving in prominent leadership roles. All the people of Iraq may proudly stand up and say, this is their government, their country, and they will honor and protect it.

Mr. Speaker, the historic significance of this event cannot be overestimated. From this day forward, we must always look at Iraq as a nation of independence, a nation of freedom and a nation of democracy. May it always be.

"NO COST" SUGAR PROGRAM

(Mr. BLUMENAUER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, there is a Dear Colleague circulating on Capitol Hill that talks about our no-cost sugar subsidy program. I would suggest that each of our Congressional offices have a little contest, take the certified smart young interns that we have working for us and have a contest in your office. See how long it takes them to prove how bogus that claim is.

How long will it take them to find out that there is a \$1- to \$2 billion cost to the taxpayer and the consumer, that there are environmental costs for cleaning up the Everglades, that this program threatens over 500,000 American jobs in the candy industry that are being driven to Mexico and Canada