

issues and legislation regarding the security of our law enforcement community and the American people. There is no greater function of the Federal Government than to provide for the common defense against all enemies, both foreign and domestic.

Therefore, it is imperative that we work to support our law enforcement officers and agents and their families by providing them with the training and resources they need to properly carry out their duties. Furthermore, there should be greater incentives in place to encourage harsher sentences for violent offenders who might otherwise be released to the streets and repeat dangerous offenses.

While law enforcement officers risk their own safety every day for the well-being of our Nation and local communities, Congress must do as much as possible to ensure the preparedness and security of our noble crime fighters. As we prepare next week to nationally honor the courage of police officers like our own Texas State Trooper Scott Burns, let us consider the well-being of our law enforcement officers and their families with the same persistence and selflessness with which they afford us.

WE NEED AN ENERGY PLAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. AKIN) for 1 minute.

Mr. AKIN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In the last little more than a year, gasoline prices have gone up \$1.33 cents a gallon. That's a larger increase than what we've had over the previous 5 years before that. The Democrat leadership said that they had a plan at that time, this is a year ago, to keep the gas prices from going up. Yet the gas prices have gone up.

Now I don't think the American public wants us to bicker between parties. They want us to be solving problems. And I don't believe it's the Democrats' fault necessarily that the gas prices have gone up internationally. But what is a problem is that we're not dealing with the problem. What we should be talking about is how do we move off of our dependence on foreign oil to American energy? What we should be seeing would be movement in the direction, depending on which way people want to go, additional refinement capacity. There have been no new refineries built in over 30 years. Investment in new nuclear technology. Our nuclear technology is old, many, many years old. It's a good source of energy. The idea of getting liquid fuel from coal. We have tremendous coal resources. Shouldn't there be something being done in that area?

But nothing in any of these areas. A lack of a plan is unacceptable. It's not the Democrats' fault that gas prices go up, but it is a problem when we don't have a plan.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 58 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. TAUSCHER) at noon.

PRAYER

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

Eternal Father, drawing us ever closer to You, the spring rains make us mindful of Your presence in our lives.

Water comes down from the heavens as rain. Although it is always the same itself, it produces so many different effects. One in the tree, another in the rose bush, still another in the vine, and so in the whole of creation. Remaining essentially the same, the rain adapts itself to the needs of each creature that receives it with the openness of absorbing life.

In the same way, Your Spirit, Lord, remaining absolutely simple in its integrity, apports its grace upon each Member of Congress. Your Spirit makes one a teacher of honest facts; another a visionary of the future; to another, the ability to remove obstacles; and yet another the art of compromise. Still others respond with a depth of spirituality and service not easily recognized.

May all respond to this plenitude and accomplish great deeds for this Nation, revealing Your glory at work in the world 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 her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. LATTA. Madam Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. LATTA. Madam Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. MORAN of Virginia 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

WHO'S THE "CHUMP" IN THE OIL GAME?

(Mr. MORAN of Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Madam Speaker, we have a situation today where Americans are paying almost \$4 a gallon for gasoline. This morning, Goldman Sachs announced that oil is going to go up to \$150 to \$200 a barrel, which means that it is not going to stop at \$4. It will be about \$5 or \$6.

Now, think about this: This is a tremendous boom to Iran and Iraq. Iran will gain enormous wealth and political influence. Iraq will get even more revenue than the \$72 billion they're anticipating this year. They got \$100 billion over the last couple of years, much of it our money.

And yet Americans have already contributed over half a trillion dollars to Iraq's economy. Within the next couple of weeks, we'll appropriate another \$170 billion. Iraqis are getting a surplus of oil revenue from us and yet we are paying to pick up their garbage and train their security forces when they've got surpluses they don't even know what to do with.

Who's the chump in this picture, Madam Speaker?

LET'S BE CAUTIOUS WITH MORTGAGE BAIL-OUT PROGRAMS

(Mr. NEUGEBAUER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Madam Speaker, before I came to Congress, I had an opportunity to serve my constituents in a different way. I was a home builder, a land developer, and even a mortgage lender. I know firsthand some of the problems that the real estate industry and the housing industry is facing today.

Ninety-four percent of the American homeowners are paying their mortgage

payments on time and in full. Are some people having a hard time making these mortgage payments? Of course they are. Can the government help? Yes, in some cases. But I urge my colleagues to be very careful here. We do not need for the Federal Government to be the piggy bank for folks that made poor decisions or to bail out the lenders that made loans to people that really didn't have the capacity to pay it back. It is not fair to penalize those folks that made good decisions and played by the rules by taking their tax money and rewarding those who didn't.

For many of my constituents, they are having a hard time just making their own mortgage payment. What we shouldn't be doing is taking their tax money to pay their neighbor's payment.

Madam Speaker, I encourage folks to be very cautious about these bail-out programs.

STUDY REVEALS MIDDLE CLASS WORSE OFF THAN THEY WERE FIVE YEARS AGO

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

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, 7 years of President Bush's economic policies have put a tremendous strain on middle-class families. Since 2001, health care premiums have gone up almost \$6,000, college tuition has increased by \$2,500, and gas prices have more than doubled. With these increases and paychecks that have, on the average, fallen, it's no wonder that the majority of Americans say their economic situation has not improved in the last 5 years.

While the Bush administration is eager to give tax breaks to the wealthiest of Americans and assist Wall Street firms like Bear Stearns, it does little to help middle-class families. Madam Speaker, the Democratic House recognizes the immediate need to help middle-class families, and that is why our budget prioritized middle-class tax relief and why we are proposing a second economic stimulus package.

It's time for President Bush to put the middle class ahead of the wealthiest few.

WHEN WILL THE DEMOCRAT LEADERSHIP KEEP ITS COMMITMENT TO RURAL COMMUNITIES

(Mr. WALDEN of Oregon asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Madam Speaker, by refusing to renew the county payments program, Congress has broken its pledge to rural areas all across this country like Grant County, Oregon, where Federal land covers 61 percent of the county. That's 300 square miles larger than the entire State of Delaware.

The school children of Grant County rely on the Federal Government to be a

good neighbor. During my most recent visit to Prairie City School and the eighth grade class of Andy Demko, I was told by the school superintendent, Newell Cleaver, that only the county payments funds through the Road Department have kept the schools going.

Our Speaker has said she would like this to be "The Children's Congress." So why won't the Democratic leadership bring a vote on H.R. 3058, which is a bipartisan, 4-year reauthorization timber program, keeping a 100-year-old commitment from this government to these counties?

It has been 112 days since H.R. 3058 was made eligible for a vote. It's here on the Union Calendar of the House. We have had 51 legislative days when it could have been brought up for a vote to help secure rural schools, and yet the leadership of this House refuses to even schedule it for a vote on the House floor.

When will the Democrat leadership of the House keep its commitment to rural communities?

URGING THE PRESIDENT TO STOP FILLING THE STRATEGIC PETROLEUM RESERVE

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

Mr. WILSON of Ohio. Madam Speaker, as gas prices have once again hit record highs, congressional Democrats are urging President Bush to take action. For 7 years he has sat on the sidelines, and even last week at a press conference in the Rose Garden, he concluded that the cost-benefit analysis of immediate action for consumers were not persuasive enough for him to act.

House Democrats are calling on President Bush to stop filling the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. This reserve is 97 percent full, which is more than enough to meet any emergency we would have. Experts believe that tapping the reserve could lower our gas prices by as much as 5 cents to 25 cents per gallon.

Right now, Americans need help. They're hurting. President Bush could take action today that would provide immediate relief to consumers at the pump, but he refuses to act. Once again, House Democrats urge the President to reconsider.

HOOSIERS VOTE WITH MORE CONFIDENCE TODAY

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. Madam Speaker, today America's eyes are turning to Indiana and North Carolina as tens of thousands of Americans are making their decision in primary election days. And thanks to the United States Supreme Court decision in Crawford v. Marion County Election Board, et al., Hoosiers will be voting today with greater confidence than ever before.

The Supreme Court decided last week in a 6-3 decision that Indiana's laws requiring photo identification to vote is constitutional. In its opinion, the Supreme Court noted, "There is no question about the legitimacy or importance of a State's interest in counting only eligible voters' votes." It further stated, "Indiana's interest in protecting public confidence in elections, while closely related to its interest in preventing voter fraud, has independent significance, because such confidence encourages citizen participation in the democratic process."

Indiana's laws had its critics in this body, but I rise to extol the Supreme Court and all of those in Indiana and North Carolina who, with greater confidence today, will exercise their franchise and guide America's future integrity.

TIME FOR ACTION ON RECORD GAS PRICES

(Mr. WELCH of Vermont asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, for the past 7 years, President Bush has been delivering an energy policy that has resulted in the highest increase in the cost of energy in the history of this country. Last week, the President continued his call for more of the same when he touted an old plan for domestic drilling in the Arctic that would produce a 6-month supply of oil 10 years from now. It is not going to do anything about the price at the pump now, it is not going to do anything about the price at the pump later.

Instead, the President is blaming congressional Democrats for not addressing the problem, but it's the President who won't suspend purchases of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve which would bring down prices 25 cents immediately. It's the President who won't work with us to get rid of the Enron loophole which is enriching speculators and clobbering middle class families.

This year, in fact, the Democratic Congress has passed energy legislation that's getting nowhere because of being held hostage in the Senate and it has no support from the President of the United States.

The reality is that we have actions we can take in the short term, the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, the Enron loophole, and in the long term, to reduce our reliance on carbon.

INVEST IN AMERICAN ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, Americans are paying the price at the pump for the inaction of this majority. Democrats promised