

the American people 2 years ago last week that they had a plan to address rising gas prices. It appears that plan was nothing more than election year politics. That's a shame because right now, Americans are paying nearly \$4 a gallon for gas. The effect of these rising prices is felt not just when we fill up our tank. We see the rising prices at the grocery store because our food is shipped in trucks all across this country.

The American people do not expect a quick fix, but they do expect us to work toward energy independence rather than simply pointing fingers and blame. We live in a global market and many nations are competing for oil. Let's start by promoting American alternative energy. Let's invest in American oil. Let's advance American energy exploration. The co-ops of America, led by National President Jack Wolfe, are leading the way.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th.

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COMPREHENSIVE HOUSING REFORM

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

Mr. HODES. Madam Speaker, there's no doubt that the housing crisis and the consumer credit crunch are getting worse. Last week, we learned that the number of homes facing foreclosure more than doubled from last year. In my home State of New Hampshire, foreclosures have increased nearly 96 percent.

That is why it is so important that Congress pass the comprehensive housing package that is coming to the floor this week. The legislation is the most innovative and comprehensive solution to the housing crisis yet. It will give relief to the millions of working families struggling to pay their mortgage with the rising price of gas and food. It would help nearly 1.5 million Americans in need. Our package would also offer assistance to State and localities to purchase and rehabilitate foreclosed properties.

Madam Speaker, our economy cannot rebound unless we act now to give relief to millions of Americans in need. We have a bold proposal to take this decisive action. I certainly hope that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle understand the urgent need and that we will receive bipartisan support for this proposal.

POLL RESULTS: MEDIA NOT OBJECTIVE

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, during a telephone town meeting

last night, I asked my constituents, "Do you think the media are fair and objective in their news coverage?" Ninety-one percent of the almost 400 respondents said the media are not fair, and only 7 percent said that they are fair.

This is an amazing result but not a surprising one, since slanted coverage pervades much of the news Americans get every day.

One of the greatest threats America faces is a biased media. If the American people don't get the facts, they can't make good decisions. And if they can't make good decisions, we won't have a democracy.

The national media need to let the American people make up their own minds, not tell them what to think.

ISRAEL'S 60TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

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

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, today we have an opportunity to signify an important milestone in Israel's history. We celebrate its 60th anniversary, a truly important time in Jewish history.

My district in the San Joaquin Valley is the bread basket of the Nation, but we have a unique relationship between California State University at Fresno and Ben Gurion University of the Negev. My constituents for years have been partnering with their counterparts in Israel to research water, irrigation technologies and agricultural solutions to problems that face our world.

Fresno State has a long history in working with many leading drip and micro-irrigation equipment manufacturers in Israel, and the university has a long history of exchange of information with the Agricultural Research Organization's Volcani Center in Israel, including exchange programs that have brought research scientists to work on water and salinity issues.

Fresno State continues today to have discussions with Israeli researchers and industry on how to extend a beneficial use of the world's ever shrinking supply of water for the important purpose of feeding our world.

For this and many other reasons, we recognize and celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Nation of Israel.

FAILURE TO PASS THE COLOMBIA TRADE AGREEMENT HAS INCREASED THE COST OF U.S. EXPORTS BY MORE THAN \$1 BILLION

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

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise today to ask this House, why do we continue to punish Illinois and U.S. manufacturers and farmers?

In the 531 days since the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement was signed, U.S. products exported to Colombia have suffered over \$1 billion in taxes and tariffs because they were exported to the United States through Colombia. And during that period of time, Colombian products entering the United States come in duty free. That doesn't seem fair.

We have an agreement with Colombia to eliminate those tariffs, and every day we delay it costs almost \$190 million a week in higher tariffs on U.S.-made products.

The U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement is good for States like Illinois. I represent a State that's dependent on exports. Our biggest product we produce in the district I represent, we have 8,000 union workers who produce yellow bulldozers and construction equipment, something that's common and in need in places like Colombia.

Let's be competitive. Let's eliminate those tariffs. Let's bring up for a vote the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement.

NATIONAL TEACHER DAY

(Mrs. CAPPs asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAPPs. Madam Speaker, on this National Teacher Day, I rise to single out just one of the many talented teachers in my congressional district.

Libby Anderson teaches second grade at Grover Heights Elementary School in Grover Beach. It's a national blue ribbon school. She is one of those gifted teachers with a truly unique way of igniting the interest of her students.

A few years ago, she led a class project where each student picked a lighthouse to study from around the country. Through that project one student learned of the Federal efforts to restore the Piedras Blancas lighthouse in my district.

Under her guidance, the class embarked on a campaign called "Pennies for Piedras" to raise money toward this effort. By the end of that school year, the students had raised \$1,337.30 in pennies.

I'm happy to say that her students have gone on to lead support for continued restoration of this special place.

This is just one example of the many exceptional ways this teacher touched the lives of her students and expanded their awareness of their community.

Our country is blessed to have teachers like Ms. Anderson who spark students' passions, encouraging them to get involved in the world around them.

ENERGY PRICES

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

Mr. LATTa. Madam Speaker, with no relief in sight for the American public as they continue to endure the costs