

Today, I have seniors from my own district, from my home, visiting D.C. They are from the Magnolia Multipurpose Center in Houston. And I have to tell them that, yes, they now have a benefit; but only if their insurance policy decides to give it to them. And who knows how much it will cost.

Mr. Speaker, we should be providing lifesaving pharmaceuticals to seniors, not an insurance policy. We should be providing a secure, stable and reliable benefit instead of creating a bureaucratic nightmare. And we should be building up Medicare, not tearing it down. Our seniors deserve more than a voucher.

#### TRUCKERS SUFFERING DUE TO GAS CRISIS

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

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, America's truckers are a vital part of our economy. Truckers deliver the food we eat, the clothes we wear, and the materials we use to build our homes.

Unfortunately, for the past several months truckers have been hit particularly hard by rising fuel prices. These outrageous fuel prices are threatening the livelihood of thousands of truckers across the United States. When truckers cannot afford to fill their tanks, they will be forced off the road. Without trucking, commerce in our Nation would grind to a halt. With gas prices continuing their steep rise this summer, an even greater number of truckers are being threatened.

Energy Secretary Bill Richardson has admitted that the Clinton-Gore administration was "caught napping" when it comes to fuel prices. And now the American people are forced to foot the bill for the Clinton-Gore failure. How unfair.

#### CONDEMNING ACTIONS OF IRANIAN GOVERNMENT

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

Mr. VISLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to condemn the actions of the Iranian government against 13 members of that Nation's Jewish community. The citizens arrested over a year ago have been accused of spying for Israel. Ten of the 13 have been in prison since their arrest last year. All have been brought before a court with no jury, in which the judge also serves as the prosecutor, to face accusations that they have not heard, without the assistance of a lawyer or any contact with their families or friends.

This would, unfortunately, not be the first time a show trial in Iran resulted in the deaths of members of the Jewish community. Since the Islamic revolution in 1979, 17 Jews have been executed in Iran. I say it is time for this to stop.

I call on those in Iran who represent reason and reform to intervene and prevent a brutal outcome to this trial.

#### GAS PRICES SOARING OUT OF CONTROL

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

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, Americans are taking to the roads for summer vacations. At least that is what they would like to do.

Regrettably, rising gallons prices may keep many Americans from taking summer vacations this year. Gasoline prices are soaring out of control. In the Midwest, those prices are nearing \$2.50 a gallon.

Americans across the Nation are paying for the failed energy policy of the Clinton-Gore administration. Thanks to them, our Nation is more dependent on foreign oil today than it was during the gas crisis of the Carter administration. Worst of all, the President famous for saying "I feel your pain" has an Energy Secretary who admitted he was "caught napping" when the energy crisis hit our Nation.

Well, Secretary Richardson should wake up and pay attention. Americans cannot afford much more of these outrageous gas prices. Americans are tired of getting gored at the pump.

#### REPEAL GAS TAX DURING GAS CRISIS

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, we have a Vice President who wants to do away with the internal combustion engine. And I guess that is fine, for the inventor of the Internet, who thinks all the world should go to the office on the information highway.

But with that information in mind, for the past 7 years we have had an administration that has locked up the strategic oil petroleum reserves in America, choking off our own domestic supply. We have had an administration who has taken great pride in blowing up dams out West, even though we get 10 percent of our energy from hydropower. And we have an administration who has closed off our oil pipelines in Alaska.

As a result, today Americans are paying anywhere from 50 cents to 75 cents to \$1 a gallon higher at the pump. It does not have to be this way. We need to have a coherent, cohesive energy policy that says if we need to be weaned from this evil internal combustion engine, let us do it so we do not have the hardships that we have at the pump for the American middle-class family.

I think we should repeal the 18 cents per-gallon gas tax and give Americans some relief.

#### GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY FOR PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE MISSED

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, yesterday we missed a golden opportunity to make prescription drugs more affordable for America's seniors. We passed a sham Republican leadership bill that fails to give all the seniors the Medicare prescription drug coverage that they so richly deserve.

We need to have a prescription drug benefit that is affordable, that gives doctors the right to prescribe medications, that addresses soaring costs; and yet the proposal yesterday does not accomplish any of those goals. It does not cover all seniors, it does not give doctors and seniors the right to choose the best medications, and it does nothing to address the skyrocketing prices of prescription drugs.

The Democratic plan would provide American seniors with an affordable, voluntary, and reliable prescription drug coverage. The plan is firmly rooted in the Medicare program that seniors know and that they trust. In contrast, the Republican plan is complex, and it is built on an already failing HMO system.

The Republican leadership forced through this plan that gives seniors false promises and false hopes. It might be the right remedy for the insurance companies, but it certainly is the wrong remedy for America's seniors.

□ 1030

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SKEEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and that I may include tabular and extraneous material on H.R. 4461.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COOKSEY). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Mexico?

There was no objection.

#### AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2001

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 538 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 4461

□ 1031

#### IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 4461) making appropriations for Agriculture,