

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my strong support for both the men and women of our Armed Forces and the American civilians serving in Iraq through the Department of State and other U.S. agencies. I thank them for their courage and the dedication that they have so bravely displayed in carrying out their noble mission of liberating and securing Iraq from tyranny and terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, I have witnessed such dedication in conversations with a former staffer of mine who returned from Iraq this past summer and from one of my former interns who served with the United States Army in Iraq. I have frequently discussed the situation in Iraq with my husband, Dexter, a decorated Vietnam veteran who was wounded in combat and was awarded a Purple Heart.

However, it has been my talks with my stepson Dougie, a first lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps who is currently serving in Iraq, which has helped me the most and has had the most profound effect on me and helped me to fully comprehend the importance of the mission that our men and women in the Armed Forces are embarked upon in Iraq. To him it is not an obligation. It is an honor and a privilege to have the opportunity to serve our country; to contribute to the freedom of the Iraqi people; to confront the terrorists; and perhaps most importantly, to fight tyranny, as the Greatest Generation did during World War II.

Our mission is just. It has far-reaching, longstanding, strategic, and political ramifications. It is helping to further U.S. security and foreign policy goals throughout the region. For these reasons and, most importantly, for my stepson Doug Lehtinen, and his fiancée, Lindsay Nelson, who is also a Marine officer currently serving in Iraq, and all of the members of the U.S. Armed Forces serving in Afghanistan and Iraq and elsewhere, we must continue to fully support our troops and their mission. Simply stated, we cannot afford to yield a victory to the terrorists in Iraq and throughout the region.

Iraq is one of the epicenters of the U.S. comprehensive strategy to fight terrorism worldwide, a strategy that includes killing and disrupting terrorists abroad; confronting theocratic and

autocratic regimes that harbor terrorists and facilitate terrorist attacks; and promoting economic reform and democracy as a means to address those threats.

Our ability to project major Armed Forces to the very heart of the Middle East provides the United States, as well as our allies in the war against terrorism, the wherewithal to directly address the tactical and ideological challenges of Islamic extremism. Our presence in Iraq further strengthens our leverage against current and emerging democracies and increases the deterrent value of U.S. power.

Finally, through the promotion of incipient Iraqi democracy, we can continue our concerted efforts to counter the root causes of Islamic extremism and terrorism in that area.

However, our success in Iraq will not come without challenges. Creating new and effective political and security institutions in Iraq takes time. The task before us is not insurmountable; but if rushed, we do risk failure for lack of persistence. The continuing presence of U.S. and coalition forces must be determined by the achievement of concrete objectives. We cannot send a message to the terrorists that their war of attrition is succeeding and that we are weakening in our resolve to win.

The Iraqi people have not weakened their resolve, and they have clearly demonstrated their commitment to both the establishment and the solidification of a democratic political culture through their January 30 election, through the October 15 referendum on their Constitution, and their preparations for the December 15 elections.

Our men and women in uniform are not and have not weakened their resolve. Let us not weaken our resolve in the United States Congress. Let us not waver in our commitment to our mission, our very important and noble cause in Iraq.

GAS AND OIL COMPANY
PROFITEERING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, every day now we see headlines in the newspaper much like this one here from the USA Today back on October 7, 2005, saying: "Staying Warm To Cost up to 90 Percent More This Year," as energy costs have just skyrocketed in this country. Our constituents are bracing for a harsh winter, a record high in home energy costs; and they just continue to skyrocket, while oil companies are announcing record-breaking third quarter profits.

Even though gas has come down a little bit, 2 weeks ago even in my district, the headline in the Marquette Mining Journal from October 19 said we are number one. We have the dubious title of having the highest gas prices in the upper peninsula of Michigan. And it is

no wonder why we have record profits by the oil companies.

Our constituents are angry and are frustrated, and they deserve answers from their elected officials. We must not stand by and let oil and gas companies engage in price gouging and profiteering when families are going to be forced to pay so much more to heat their homes, to heat their places of business, as we see in article after article anywhere from a 50 to 90 percent increase in home heating costs in the upcoming months.

If we take a look at the documents recently provided by the current administration from the Energy Information Administration, the American family is going to have a 60 percent increase this year just to heat their homes this winter. We have almost a 50 percent increase, they figure, in natural gas. It will be a \$350 increase this year. Home heating oil they figure is going to be a \$378 increase over last year. Propane, \$325 over last year. This is from, again, the Energy Information Administration. What we have seen are a lot of demands from our constituents to do something, but nothing is really being done.

In this Congress here a few weeks ago, we did try to pass an energy bill to try to address price gouging, market manipulation, and bring some transparency to how a gallon of gas or a barrel of oil is priced when we go to use it. Unfortunately, that bill, which passed the House here, was such a poor bill that the other body took one look at it and they said they were not even going to take it up.

So there was an alternative bill that never had a chance to have an up-or-down vote. It was called the FREE bill, free from energy manipulation by the oil companies. That was the Democratic bill. And what we did in our bill was this, and let me just show this chart here: Why are energy costs so high? This was from September, 2004, until September of 2005. To take the crude oil out of the ground or out of the gulf, wherever they get it, was an increase of 46 percent in the last 12 months, 46 percent. After the oil is taken out of the ground, it goes to the refiners. The refiners increased their costs and their prices 255 percent in the last 12 months. And then when it is distributed from the refinery to the gas stations, to the retailers, or to the oil companies to heat our homes this year, the cost is only 5 percent.

So the bill we had before us approximately 2 weeks ago put forth by the majority party, instead of targeting the people who have increased their prices 255 percent over the last 12 months, they targeted the poor distributors and the gas station owners and the gas station operators. They targeted the people who made 5 percent in the last year. They targeted the wrong people. Plus the Republican bill did not take in propane, did not take in natural gas. Thirdly, the only time the Republican bill would kick in was when there is a natural disaster.

In the Democratic bill, on the other hand, Mr. Speaker, we targeted all parts of the oil supply chain, from the crude producer, to the refiner, to the distributor. We said if they engage in excessive profits, like 255 percent over the last 12 months, we are going to go after those profits. That is price gouging, market manipulation, geographic price arrangements that they make from the refinery. And those excessive profits, and I think people would agree with me that 255 percent is excessive, would then be put into a fund to help the Low Income Heating Energy Assistance Program, LIHEAP as we call it.

So we take the extra money and put it in there to help people heat their homes. We finally, for once, give the FTC, the Federal Trade Commission, the authority to stop price gouging. We allow the State attorneys general to enforce Federal law, and we maintain environmental standards.

So this bill is back. We as a party, Democrats, are asking for a clean up-or-down vote on our bill. Let us put forth our bill, which is to stop the price gouging, market manipulation, the excessive regional pricing that goes on; and let us have a clean up-or-down vote on it.

In the meantime, the Democratic Party is also asking, and, in fact, the letter is being circulated today, that we bring in the oil executives and ask them to explain to us how do they justify a 255 percent increase. Even a 46 percent increase is a tremendous amount of increase in the last 12 months when inflation is running at about 3 to 4 percent. So these are the questions we have, and we would like a free, clean up-or-down vote.

As high gas prices persist, hard-working Americans are preparing for a cold winter during which they will likely face a doubling of home heating costs. These serious concerns underscore the need for this Congress to work together in a bipartisan manner. Let us investigate and crack down on the price gouging and other forms of market manipulation, and then maybe we will not see the headlines that we have seen in the last week about what the oil companies have made in the third quarter. The third quarter goes from, of course, July, August, September. In those 90 days, July, August, September, Exxon-Mobil's profit was \$9.92 billion.

□ 1900

That is the largest amount ever by a U.S. company, and 75 percent more in profits than they made last year.

Shell Oil Company, they generated \$9 billion in the third quarter, an increase of 68 percent from last year. These are excessive profits.

Conoco Phillips generated \$3.8 billion in the third quarter, an 89 percent increase from last year.

Again, we do not mind anyone making a profit. Inflation is running 3, 4, 5 percent. But 89 percent over one year?

British Petroleum generated \$6.53 billion in the third quarter. These are

profits. That is after paying for everything else. They cannot say it costs more. But these are profits, over and above.

And Chevron generated \$3.6 billion.

The earnings of the world's five largest publicly traded oil companies this quarter have put them on track to earn \$100 billion this year.

Mr. Speaker, I hope this Congress can work together and pass a real energy program to help all Americans.

SUPPORT FOR ALITO NOMINATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SCHWARZ of Michigan). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, these are historic and great days in America because President George W. Bush has nominated Judge Samuel Alito to the United States Supreme Court.

Mr. Speaker, this is a man of outstanding character and one who has more experience as a sitting judge than any nominee for the Supreme Court in the last 70 years. As always, extremists on the left are viciously attacking this highly qualified nominee because he shares a judicial philosophy with this duly elected President.

Mr. Speaker, what is at stake here with these judicial nominations is the Constitution itself, that miraculous document by which we guard our God-given rights in this country; and what is also at risk is keeping secure the American dream for future generations.

In this day, we sometimes forget that the American dream is actually about human dignity and freedom and self-governance. It is not about the left's moral relativism, which means that those without conscience have a license to do anything without consequence, regardless of its harm to others.

True freedom actually means having a system of self-government that protects the rights of innocent people to live and to be free and to pursue their dreams in their own way, as long as they do not desecrate the lives and rights of others. The choice that faces us in these pivotal times is whether or not we as a people are still capable of understanding and guarding the fundamental rights that undergird our freedom.

Mr. Speaker, I have great hope that we still are. Liberal activists on the courts have been undermining the Constitution and America's fundamental rights of liberty and life and property for decades.

Just yesterday, the liberal Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled, "There is no fundamental right of parents to be the exclusive provider of information regarding sexual matters to their children. Parents have no due process or privacy right to override the determinations of public schools as to the

information to which their children will be exposed while enrolled as students."

Mr. Speaker, for these liberal judges to say that parents have no right to determine what their children are taught about sex, or anything else, for that matter, is outrageous. America has rejected this sort of bankrupt, liberal extremism at the ballot, and now the left is desperately trying to hold on to the courts to force this extremist agenda down the throats of all Americans.

The liberal, secular left wants to take the words "under God" out of the Pledge of Allegiance. They want to completely dismantle marriage and family. They want to end voluntary prayer, any kind of traditional voluntary religious expression in public places.

They teach your children in school that it is "mainstream" in America to use abortion and even partial-birth abortion as a means of birth control. They are saying to the parents of America that if your underage daughter is impregnated by a man, he should be able to take her to have an abortion without your knowledge or permission, that it is none of your business.

Mr. Speaker, those attacking Judge Alito are so far to the left that they cannot even see the majority of us here in America, and it is so important that the people of this country understand what the left means when they say "mainstream" when they say that Judge Alito is out of the mainstream. They are talking about his rulings in cases where the overwhelming majority of Americans agree with him. That is the very definition of "mainstream."

Mr. Speaker, for the sake of this Republic, we must invite those leftists who insist on smearing Judge Alito's reputation to step into open debate where the bright light of truth can shine on their ideology and expose to the people of America exactly how far out of the mainstream they really are.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for this debate. It is long overdue. The future of the American people living in freedom depends on it.

CAMPAIGN TO MINIMIZE LIES THAT LED TO IRAQ WAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the minority leader's attempt to get oversight. She stood here today and asked in a resolution, which was not voted on by the House, was not allowed to be discussed by the House, that the Republican leadership conduct oversight of an executive branch controlled by the same party which is in contradiction to the established rules of standing committees and the congressional precedent.

It is time for this House to begin an investigation of the executive branch.