

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.