

## WEST COAST ENERGY CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TIBERI). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, those of us living in California have reached a critical point in determining how Congress and the President will address the West Coast Energy Crisis.

Earlier today, the House Committee on Energy and Commerce canceled its consideration of a bill that would have prevented price-gouging and blackouts in California and other Western States. The President and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission have said "no" time after time to Californians. Now it looks like the Republicans in Congress are saying "no" to California; also, "we will not help you."

This is very disturbing. The West Coast energy crisis threatens not only the health of our economy, but the health of our citizens, because the blackouts roll out through hospitals, through disabled individuals living in their own homes, in nursing homes and other facilities across our State. The President has said no. The Federal Energy Commission has said no, because they believe that price caps will not help the situation.

The President recently said in his visit to California that price caps would not help California, they would not increase supply or reduce demand. Yet we see that 10 of this Nation's leading economists wrote the President to politely disagree with him. They, in fact, made a very strong case. The cost-based price caps temporarily, until the energy supply can be reached in California, would, in fact, help stabilize, stabilize the supply of energy to California.

A majority of Americans recently expressed their opinions in the Washington Post, where 58 percent said they favored temporary price caps. Much of the energy crisis in California is beyond our own control, and certainly in the rest of the West. Because we are in the second driest year on record, we do not have the water behind the dams because of the drought to create hydroelectric power. The American people understand this, but the Republicans in Congress do not, the President of the United States does not, and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission does not.

What is very disturbing is we watched the President develop an energy policy as we started to see the closeness between the administration, the White House and America's mainline energy companies. This past weekend we saw disclosed the strong personal financial ties of top members of the Bush administration's energy team to those very same energy generators. Many of us have been concerned about this for some time, but we now saw evidence of it.

Chief political strategist Karl Rove had a \$100,000 to \$250,000 investment in

Enron, one of the major marketers of energy on the West Coast. Lawrence Lindsay gained \$50,000 as a consulting fee from Enron. Condoleezza Rice, the National Security Advisor, \$250,000 to \$500,000 in Chevron and earned \$60,000 as the director on the Chevron Board of Directors. Clay Johnson, director of the President's personnel, held stock valued between \$100,000 and \$250,000 in El Paso Energy Partners, a Houston oil and natural gas company, involved in the West Coast energy problems. The Washington Post also says that Mr. Johnson has been involved in selecting the people who will serve on the Federal Energy Commission, the very same people who will be regulating the companies in which he has a financial interest. Many of us were concerned that they were creating an office of special interest in the White House, and I think that concern is starting to come forward.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that is kind of interesting is when we look at the President's energy policy and we look at the annual report of Exxon-Mobil, we find that many of the same consistencies are there. We see in the President's energy policy that he shows us that, in fact, they have energy for a new century, and here we have offshore oil drilling that is familiar to us; we have been doing it for many, many years. When we pick up the Exxon-Mobil annual report, we see the same dedication. This is not about energy for a new century, this is about an old fossil fuel-dependent economy from which America must move on.

Exxon wants to highlight its drilling techniques. We see the drilling techniques that show us that from one rig one can drill a number of different pockets of oil, one can do directional drilling, and one can reduce the supply. We go back to the President's energy policy, and we see that, in fact, we have essentially the same graphs, the same pictures, telling us that this is the way that we can get into the ANWR Wildlife Refuge, that if we drill it just the way that Exxon told us we could in their report, all things would be fine and there would be no environmental damage. Again, we see the closeness of the two. It goes on until we see the same points being made about refinery capacity, the same pictures, the same discussion.

The time has come for the administration to separate itself from a very old and tired energy policy, and to move on and engage the full ingenuity and the talent of the American economy and its creative energies and to move on to renewables, to move on to replaceable energy supplies so that America, in fact, can move on with its economy and its families will not have to continue to be gouged because of the greed of the same energy generators who are doing it on the West Coast of the United States.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. GANSKE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GANSKE. Mr. Speaker, since 1965, when Medicare was enacted, virtually all senior citizens and most people with disabilities have been able to access mainstream medical care. Each working day, Medicare beneficiaries make almost 1 million physician visits.

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Medicare serves 39 million Americans, and deals with about 1 million health care providers: doctors, nurses, hospitals, nursing homes, and others.

Since 1974 when, as a medical student, I first started seeing patients, and for the next 20 years as a physician prior to coming to Congress, I saw firsthand how important Medicare was to my patients. Medicare has been a very important part of our Nation's health care system, and I want to preserve and protect it.

A couple of years ago, I served on the Bipartisan Medicare Commission: I resigned after I became concerned that my very active role in the bipartisan patient protection legislation would affect the chances of consensus being reached on the commission.

However, based on my past experience actually working with Medicare patients, after culling from my work on the commission, and after listening and learning from testimony before the Subcommittee on Health and the Environment, on which I sit, I have a few suggestions for improving Medicare's administration.

Mr. Speaker, these suggestions are not about sweeping Medicare reform. They do not deal with the long-term solvency of Medicare when the baby boomers retire. Those types of "big picture" decisions are beyond the scope of what my remarks are about today.

I make this observation: to ensure the long-term survival of Medicare, additional funding will be necessary. And, contrary to the intentions of others, "Medicare reform" will not pay for a prescription benefit and will not ensure the long-term solvency of the program without additional funds. The demographics and the costs of services and supplies are a factor we will have to deal with when we are talking about the baby boomers in Medicare.

I recently asked Secretary of Health and Human Services, Tommy Thompson, who was testifying before my committee, two questions: First, "Do you think senior citizens are being overtreated in Medicare?"; second, "Do you think Medicare providers are overpaid?"

He replied that, with the caveat that we always need to be vigilant against abuse, it was not his experience as a Governor of Wisconsin that senior citizens in general were being overtreated,