

Reagan and Bush administrations. As his first act in office, President George W. Bush restored the Mexico City Policy on January 20, 2001 and released a letter stating, "I will veto any legislation that weakens current Federal policies and laws on abortion, or that encourages the destruction of human life at any stage."

The Mexico City Policy should not have been weakened. Taxpayer dollars should not, in any way, be used to promote abortion as a method of family planning. The United States should never be active in promoting abortions overseas. Instead, the U.S. should offer family planning programs that support the health of the mother, child and family unit.

There are several known organizations that use U.S. foreign aid funding to promote and provide abortions, as well as sterilizations, overseas. In 1998, newspapers were filled with stories of women participating in U.S. funded family planning programs who were forced to undergo sterilization procedures, especially in Peru. There were also stories of women coerced to participate in family planning programs by threatening to withhold food, clothing and shelter from their family.

In response to these atrocities, I introduced an amendment to the State, Foreign Operations Appropriations bill in 1998 that defined the meaning of "voluntary participation" in family planning programs. It was to ensure the NGOs receiving USAID funding for family planning programs understood what voluntary participation meant and required informed consent for women on the benefits and risks associated with different family planning methods. Since it was enacted for fiscal year 1999, there have been several violations and vulnerabilities in countries receiving funding. These violations and vulnerabilities were identified and corrected by USAID.

Without strong direction from the United States on how taxpayer dollars are spent, we will continue to find violations that are destructive to women and families.

It is due to the Lowey amendment, which undermines the Mexico City Policy, that I will be voting against final passage of a bill that contained important foreign aid for countries in need, such as Israel. It is unfortunate this amendment was adopted, and organizations that promote and perform abortions to the women overseas will be able to receive U.S. taxpayer funding. It is my hope the Senate will take up this bill and strike this harmful language.

Tonight, I will vote against H.R. 2476 on the basis that it clearly undermines good policy and subjects what could have been a good piece of legislation to a veto by the President. I urge my colleagues to vote against final passage of this bill.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED
AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS
ACT, 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 26, 2007

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under

consideration the bill (H.R. 2643) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior, environment, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes:

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Chairman, two days ago the House voted to defeat an amendment to H.R. 2643 offered by Mr. PETERSON that would have lifted the moratoria on the Outer Continental Shelf for natural-gas only leasing. While I voted against the amendment, I wanted to elaborate on my views on this matter.

I certainly support the gentleman's goal of increasing our access to domestic supplies of natural gas, and we have demonstrated that it is possible to explore and produce oil and gas in our oceans and remain environmentally responsible at the same time. There are dozens of platforms operating off the coast of California today, producing nearly 30 million barrels of oil and 60 billion cubic feet of natural gas each year while releasing a negligible amount of that into the environment. There hasn't been a spill of larger than 50 barrels since 1996, and there has not been a truly significant spill in nearly 40 years.

This demonstrates that when oil and gas development is done correctly, it can be a tremendous resource with little detrimental environmental impact. I support taking a close look at areas that are currently under a moratorium, so that we understand both the opportunities and the risks of opening up these regions.

Unfortunately, we are sorely lacking up-to-date information on the oil and natural resources of our Outer Continental Shelf. Earlier today I chaired a hearing in the Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee, in which the Acting Director of the Minerals Management Service, Walter Cruickshank, testified that the most recent data on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts was collected in the late 1970s. When opponents of Outer Continental Shelf development argue that 80 percent of the oil and gas is already accessible to leasing, they are using badly outdated data.

If we are going to have this discussion, we need to have a much better knowledge of the extent and value of the oil and gas resources of the Outer Continental Shelf. Only then will we be able to really look at the big picture and determine the proper balance between energy development and other important resource values, including tourism, fisheries and national security, to name a few.

My primary concern with Mr. PETERSON'S amendment is that it proposed to allow for gas-only leases.

Unfortunately, this idea is, quite simply, not feasible.

There are various reasons I come to this conclusion. Most fundamentally, however, is the simple fact that oil and gas are often co-located and it is unrealistic to assume or assert that the industry would be interested in buying a lease that would preclude development of any oil found in the leased tract. As the former director of the Minerals Management Service, Johnnie Burton, said in a Senate hearing just last year, the vast majority of comments they received from the oil and gas industry on this idea were negative, because it was, "not terribly practical." The fact is, as Ms. Burton put it, "you never know what you are going to find until you drill."

I maintain that we should certainly be taking a hard look at those areas that are currently off limits, many of which may be appropriate

places to explore. As Chairman of the Energy and Mineral Resources subcommittee, I look forward to working with my colleagues to help craft a forward-thinking energy bill that looks at the big picture, and admit that there is no silver bullet for solving our nation's energy challenges. We must increase domestic production of fossil fuels while at the same time focusing on renewables, conservation, and ensuring that we strike the proper balance of development of our nation's abundant resources and good environmental stewardship.

HONOR OF CITY OF HASTINGS,
NEBRASKA

HON. ADRIAN SMITH

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2007

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to honor a community in Nebraska's Third Congressional District, the City of Hastings, for being named the Greenest City in America by Yahoo! Incorporated. The contest to be the Greenest City in America began on May 14 and ended earlier this month.

Residents of Hastings made an online pledge on Yahoo's website to live their everyday lives in a more environmentally-friendly way and then followed through on their pledges. I am proud Hastings earned this title, and I look forward to its ongoing efforts to make the City as eco-friendly as possible.

This contest and the improvements Hastings made on its way to the top are perfect examples of an effective and fun way to protect our environment and learn about activities which can improve our lives. This is also a perfect example of how a private company—not a government mandate—can encourage cities throughout America to improve their local communities. This was not a government program compelling improvement, it was a private company helping towns and cities do what is right, and I commend both Hastings and Yahoo for their stewardship.

I hope other companies follow Yahoo's lead, as I hope other communities in our country follow Hastings' example.

RECOGNIZING "NATIONAL HOMELESS YOUTH AWARENESS MONTH"

HON. JERRY WELLER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2007

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Madam Speaker, today Representative MCDERMOTT and I introduced a resolution to designate November as national homeless youth awareness month.

Earlier this month the Ways and Means Income Security and Family Support Subcommittee on which I serve as Ranking Member held a hearing on "disconnected youth." That's a group that includes young people who often drop out of school, don't work, and wind up on the streets. These young people may have family conflict issues, may experience abuse and neglect, or may be or have been in the past involved in the foster care