



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 110th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 154

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, JUNE 10, 2008

No. 95

House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. McNULTY).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 10, 2008.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MICHAEL R. McNULTY to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 25 minutes and each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 9:50 a.m.

GAS PRICE RELIEF FOR CONSUMERS ACT OF 2008

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KAGEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. KAGEN. Mr. Speaker, last month, I had the opportunity and the pleasure to work with the bipartisan majority of 221 Democrats and 103 Republicans, including the entire Wisconsin delegation, to pass the Gas Price Relief for Consumers Act of 2008. This will in time decrease gas prices for everyone and will make certain that no one is able to manipulate oil prices and to control the free markets.

One year ago, crude oil was selling for \$65 a barrel, and all of us were paying around \$3 per gallon at the pump. We thought things were bad then. The cost per barrel for crude oil has more than doubled since last year while, this week, we are forced to pay in northeast Wisconsin over \$4 per gallon. Yet this is taking place during a recession when demand for oil is down. This is not the way of the free marketplace.

Like you, I was more than a little surprised to learn that, during this past January of 2008, we had so much oil right here in the United States that American oil companies were exporting 335,000 barrels of diesel per day to Europe and to Mexico. Enough is enough.

The Gas Price Relief for Consumers Act that we passed would allow us to attack gas price manipulation, something we do not currently have the authority to do. It would authorize as well an antitrust task force within the Department of Justice to begin to root out any anticompetitive activities and price manipulation in the speculative and volatile futures markets. For the first time, it would instruct the Federal Government to evaluate the damaging effects of past oil company mergers and acquisitions and these effects that they have had on our families and on small businesses alike.

This is the first step in beginning to reestablish a free and open marketplace in the world's oil delivery, something that Teddy Roosevelt attempted in the early 1900s.

My friends, we are today no further advanced in establishing a free and open marketplace than we were in 1910, but all of us who live in Wisconsin are struggling to fill our tanks today, and we need relief as fast as possible, and that's why I and an overwhelming number of my colleagues from both sides of the aisle passed this act to begin to cut gas prices immediately, realizing it will require some time to reverse the failed energy policies of the

recent past. If studies show we don't have enough oil refineries, then let's ask the question: Is it time that we build refineries on each side of the Rocky Mountains?

Skyrocketing gasoline prices are crippling family budgets and profits for small businesses everywhere in the country. Our long-term energy solutions, however, must include creating a new national energy policy, implementing provisions like those I fought to include in the new farm bill that will promote alternative sources of energy, leaving behind, once and for all, all of the losing ideas that we have had, namely, the drill-and-burn and drill-and-burn philosophy and policy of the Bush and Cheney administration. We cannot drill and burn our way out of this energy crisis.

Although there are many causes for today's record-high gas prices, we should not be afraid to take on specific steps today to ensure that prices for middle class families and small businesses come down. That is why we have given the Department of Justice these new tools to, in effect, put a cop back on the beat, making certain that those who are profiting from our pain at the pump will be held accountable.

With regard to the facts of the situation, let's look at some of the facts here, at the United States' oil facts. We, the people, have leased 42 million acres to oil companies, and of the 42 million acres, they are using 12 million. What else is going on?

Since the year 1980, we have lost over 200 refineries, decreasing our capability to produce more oil and diesel when we require it. What else is going on?

The outer banks. Everyone is talking about leasing the outer banks, the Outer Continental Shelf. Well, 82 percent of that property has already been leased, and they're not drilling. Some people have asked: Why aren't we drilling in ANWR? By drilling in ANWR, what are we going to get?

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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