

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the pain our families are experiencing at the pump and in the economy today, there is simply no time to wait. Action is needed now, and we call on President Bush to stand up for consumers and utilize the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

LIFT CONGRESSIONAL BAN ON ENERGY EXPLORATION

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, yesterday President Bush announced that he would be lifting the executive branch moratorium on offshore exploration for oil and natural gas. I applaud the President's actions.

House Republicans have offered a plan to expand offshore and onshore energy supply with conservation. This is part of our comprehensive approach to lowering energy prices and reducing our dependence on foreign oil.

I hope my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will join House Republicans and the American people in calling for an immediate lifting of the congressional ban on offshore drilling.

We need to invest in future alternatives to oil, but until we find a viable, affordable alternative energy source that can move our cars and transport American commerce, we need to expand exploration of American-made oil and natural gas, particularly when we have the tools and know how to do it in an environmentally sound way.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th.

FORECLOSURES

(Mr. CARDOZA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CARDOZA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my concern for the devastating toll the housing crisis is taking on the neighborhoods of my district and throughout the country.

A report issued this week identified three cities in my district as having the highest rates of foreclosure in the entire Nation. In Stockton, Merced and Modesto, California, families are struggling to make increasing mortgage payments. Homeowners have lost over 40 percent of their homes' equity and communities are burdened with vacant, deteriorating housing. These vacant properties lower home values, attract vandalism and pests and contribute to overall neighborhood decline, as well as disrupting the family unit. At this rate, my district and communities across the country will be recovering from the foreclosure epidemic for years to come.

Borrowers and lenders have a duty to their country to help us overcome this housing crisis. Homeowners should try

to work with banks instead of abandoning their homes. And financial institutions must restructure mortgages whenever feasible.

During the Great Depression, families and banks worked together to help America through these tough times. I urge us to get back to that attitude.

PUT THE PLAN IN MOTION AND PASS ENERGY LEGISLATION

(Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, American families have been bracing from an energy problem for the past few months which has turned into an energy crisis. I have heard constituents loud and clear about their concern that leaders in D.C. were not listening. I heard their voices, and my Republican colleagues and I continued to come to the floor and ask the Democrat majority for their energy plan.

When our floor speeches were continuously met with silence in the absence of a Democrat energy plan, I too began to wonder if our leaders were listening.

Thankfully, the problem was recognized and addressed by our executive branch of government. I applaud President Bush's decision yesterday to lift the Federal moratorium on offshore drilling. Congress needs to move swiftly to pass legislation to implement this now that the President has decided to lift the ban. Let's work quickly together and efficiently to craft and pass legislation that will work toward providing short-term and long-term solutions. It is up to us now, as Members of Congress, to do what is right for the citizens, to put the plan in motion, and pass energy legislation.

REDUCE THE PRICE OF GAS NOW

(Mr. ISRAEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I have finally figured it out. I have finally figured out why this administration and many of its Republican allies refuse to release oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve and all they want to do is drill, drill, drill, drill. I've figured it out.

Every time oil has been released from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, the price of oil has fallen, each and every time. This administration has refused our demands that it do the same now, when we are in an emergency and has said, I would rather drill.

But its own Department of Energy analysis said, and I quote, "Drilling would not have a significant impact on domestic crude oil and natural gas production or prices before 2030."

I figured it out. In 8 years, this administration has enabled oil company profits to go from \$39 billion to \$116 bil-

lion. Think about what those profits will go to in the next 22 years. That is what this is about.

This administration wants to give oil companies more time to reap larger profits, and refuse to give the American people the price relief they need by releasing oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve and reducing the price of gas now.

COMPREHENSIVE ENERGY REFORM

(Mr. LATTA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, President Bush's action yesterday to lift the ban on Outer Continental Shelf drilling is an important step towards a comprehensive energy plan that the American public is demanding from Congress.

Many other countries, including China, Brazil and India allow similar exploration off their coastlines. With an estimated 86 billion barrels of oil and 420 trillion cubic feet of natural gas off our own coastline, it is only logical that the United States allow similar action.

But as we know, there is no one single fix for our energy crisis. Congress must act and enact a comprehensive energy reform plan that encompasses alternative and renewable energy, in addition to the recovery and refinement of our own domestic resources, all while expanding our conservation efforts.

Our constituents have made it clear that this is the type of comprehensive energy reform they want, and we must give it to them.

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SUPPORT COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

(Mr. BACA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I speak on behalf of immigrants. In the midst of our energy crisis, gas prices, and housing crisis in the United States, there are those who continue to positively contribute to our economy. Immigrants throughout history have come to this Nation with a hunger for success in the American dream, to provide for a family, and have their kids obtain an education. And many of them are working two to three different jobs contributing to our country at stores, restaurants, and gas stations.

Immigrants often live near their establishments, are avid sponsors for local Little League, soccer, schools, and churches. Our country has always welcomed immigrants. Let's remember that we need comprehensive immigration reform for those who positively contribute to our local communities.

I urge my colleagues to support comprehensive immigration reform.