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No. 63

House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. GRAVES of Georgia).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 10, 2011.

I hereby appoint the Honorable TOM GRAVES to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 5, 2011, 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 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m.

PROTECTING CONSUMERS FROM HIGHER GAS PRICES

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

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, 1 year after the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, Americans are paying record gas prices. In northern Virginia, gas that used to cost \$3 per gallon now costs more than \$4 per gallon.

This gas price hike is a result of instability in the Middle East and possible oil speculation and is a reminder of our dangerous dependence on foreign oil.

Sadly, our Republican colleagues are not advancing legislation to help our hard-pressed consumers. Their plan would line the pockets of Big Oil, which saw its profits skyrocket 30 percent in line with rising gas prices.

Fortunately, there are positive steps we can take to promote energy independence in America and to protect consumers: improve vehicle efficiency, boost production of domestic renewable energy, and convert oil industry tax breaks into gas price relief for our consumers.

America owns 1.5 percent of the world's oil but consumes 22.5 percent; so we can't drill our way to energy independence. The only way to end our dependence on foreign oil and reduce gas prices is by improving automobile efficiency and developing new sources of clean, domestic energy. Energy independence is going to depend on reducing our oil consumption and shifting to domestic forms of energy like wind, solar, biofuels, and gas. Energy independence will save consumers money and protect us from the instability of the Middle East.

At the end of 2010, Congress extended tax credits for biofuels and the production of wind and solar energy. These tax credits increased wind energy production by nearly 43 percent in just 2 years. So extending them is an important step to increasing the supply of domestic energy.

Under the authority of the Clean Air Act, President Obama and automakers recently announced an agreement to improve the efficiency of automobiles by 30 percent by 2016. This agreement will save consumers \$3,000 for each car purchased 5 years from now. Here is another way of looking at it: If you could save 30 percent at the pump, better vehicle efficiency would more than offset the recent spike in gas prices.

Unfortunately, oil companies and their allies here in Congress are trying to roll back much of this progress. Re-

publican Speaker BOEHNER forced through legislation which would repeal much of the Clean Air Act, hurting American consumers and undermining our national security.

Last week, the leadership in the House passed legislation to short-circuit safety rules for oil production off America's coasts, increasing the likelihood of another Deepwater Horizon catastrophe. Their legislation would also allow oil exploration that would impede naval operations off the Chesapeake Bay in Virginia. This week, they want to attempt to pass a bill allowing for more oil drilling even if it interferes with military bases or endangers coastal economies.

I do not support reckless efforts to allow unregulated oil drilling which endangers coastal economies and national security. Last week, I introduced amendments to these oil drilling bills. One would strike the anti-safety language and add a provision to repeal \$37 billion in oil company tax loopholes. The amendment would remit this money to American drivers. Averaged among licensed drivers, my amendment would give \$185 to every licensed driver in America, reducing the equivalent price of gasoline by 27 cents a gallon. The other amendment was written to protect national security. It simply requires that the Commander in Chief, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, certify that before we drill for oil off the coast of Virginia that it does not hamper national security and naval operations. I was shocked that all but a handful of Republicans voted to kill this commonsense amendment.

Since the leadership has blocked efforts to include real gas price relief in their oil drilling bills, I am introducing standalone legislation to assist consumers. The bill, entitled the Gas Price Relief Act, would terminate tax loopholes for oil companies while rebating the savings to our hard-pressed commuters throughout America.

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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There are many positive steps, Mr. Speaker, we can take to reduce our dependence on foreign oil, steps that will include clean energy, renewable energy, and efficiency in our vehicles. That's the path we need to take if we are going to reduce our reliance on foreign oil and achieve genuine energy independence.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 6 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. GRAVES of Georgia) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

Reverend Jane Wood, Jerusalem-Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church, Rockville, Maryland, offered the following prayer:

O Lord our God, God of our past, present, and future, we look to You today as we begin this session of the United States House of Representatives.

We thank You this afternoon for those who are assembled here. They have been given a great privilege and an awesome responsibility.

Bestow upon them the wisdom, discernment, and knowledge they need. Be very near to each of them, and may this day be a day of accomplishment.

By Your grace, enable these Representatives to continue on the "path to a more perfect Union."

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. POE of Texas led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under clause 5(d) of rule XX, the Chair an-

nounces to the House that, in light of the resignation of the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HELLER), the whole number of the House is 432.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 9, 2011.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on May 9, 2011 at 10:05 a.m.:

That the Senate has added additional conferee H.R. 658.

Appointments:

United States Capitol Preservation Commission.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

PUTTING THE GULF BACK TO WORK ACT

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

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I have said many times on this floor and in meetings with constituents, this country does not have an energy strategy, and the only thing worse than not having an energy strategy is having bad energy policy. Yet the answer lies right here in our own backyard. We have the resources, but this administration continues to block access.

Today we're voting on H.R. 1229, the Putting the Gulf Back to Work Act. It is crucial to restoring our own capabilities to produce energy by moving forward with permit applications in a sensible amount of time.

It's deplorable that businesses, like Leed Petroleum in Lafayette, Louisiana, with 22 employees, cannot get back to work and have no options unless we hold these regulators' feet to the fire and force them to do their jobs. These independent producers and service companies, the backbone of American energy production, deserve answers and real solutions.

With oil and gas prices skyrocketing, there is no excuse for any delays to offshore energy production. The people of this country are tired of uncertainty. They are tired of dependence on foreign oil, and they're tired of record gas prices.

The bottom line is we must begin the path toward a solid energy policy to get Americans back to work. There's no excuse for delay.

HONORING ISRAEL ON HER 63RD BIRTHDAY

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

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and to celebrate the State of Israel on her 63rd birthday.

Sixty-three years ago, Israel was founded against all odds, through enormous courage and after a difficult struggle. Now she is the beacon of freedom and hope throughout the region.

As the only true democratic society in the Middle East, Israel has built a technologically advanced and thriving economy. Israel's a world leader in biotechnology research and is home to some of the world's great entrepreneurial success stories. Her people enjoy freedom of expression in all forms, and she boasts one of the strongest records on human rights.

The United States, as the first country to recognize Israel's independence, forged an unbreakable bond with Israel through our shared values and goals, and the partnership and cooperation between our two countries has never been stronger. The United States is committed to ensuring Israel's ability to defend herself and will continue to provide the most advanced assistance in security and the most robust economic aid.

In 63 years, Israel has persevered against all odds, against foreign armies, terrorism, and those who deny her right to exist.

Today we reaffirm the bond between the United States and Israel, that it will not be broken. And today the United States stands firmly with our great ally Israel in true friendship and celebration.

WHOSE SIDE IS PAKISTAN ON?

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, after years of funneling money to Pakistan, we still don't know whose side they are on in this war on terror.

We have given Pakistan \$12 billion in foreign aid since 2002. We have reimbursed them \$9 billion for their military operations in the war on terror. It's time we freeze the foreign aid to Pakistan until we get some answers about their knowledge of bin Laden's whereabouts.

We cannot continue to give Pakistan money in the hopes they will be our friend and ally. We did not trust them enough to give them advance notice of the bin Laden operation. We even had detailed plans to fight the Pakistanis if they interfered with the capture of bin Laden.

Bin Laden was able to live in a mansion right under the nose of the Pakistan military academy for years, but government officials say they didn't know where bin Laden was. That statement defies the evidence, and that "dog just won't hunt."