

thank my friend Congressman PITTS for introducing this important legislation.

Just this past week, Iranian authorities renewed an order of execution for Christian Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani, a young father of two. Pastor Nadarkhani was originally arrested in 2009 for protesting the teaching of Islam at the public school that his children attended. He was later charged with apostasy which carried a much more severe penalty. Since 2009 he has been subjected to repeated attempts to coerce him to recant his faith—which he has courageously refused to do. Rather, Pastor Nadarkhani's perseverance in the face of this injustice is a source of great inspiration. In a 2010 letter from prison, he wrote that the true believer, "does not need to wonder for the fiery trial that has been set on for him as though it were something unusual, but it pleases him to participate in Christ's suffering. Because the believer knows he will rejoice in his glory."

Indeed, Pastor Youcef has faced a "fiery trial." And now, according to a February 22 Fox New story, the latest developments mean that Pastor Youcef may be "executed at any time without prior warning, as death sentences in Iran may be carried out immediately or dragged out for years."

Pastor Youcef's case is just the latest example of Iran's attacks on basic human rights, including freedom of religion. In recent years, there has been a significant increase in Iran in acts of repression and discrimination against religious minorities including Bahai's and Christians. These actions show a continuing disregard by Iranian authorities for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as well as its own constitution.

In addition to supporting this resolution condemning Iran for these shocking and flagrant violations of fundamental freedoms, I call on the government of Iran to immediately and unconditionally release Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PITTS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 556, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

#### APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO BOARD OF VISITORS OF THE UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 4355(a), clause 10 of rule I, and the order of the House of January 5, 2011, of the following Members of the House to the Board of Visitors of the United States Military Academy:

Mr. HINCHEY, New York;

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ, California.

#### FREEDOM OF RELIGION

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

Mr. PEARCE. Less than 1 month ago, Kathleen Sebelius issued a finding that said that every insurance company in the country would have to offer insurance products, some of which would offend the faiths of many people. This is against our Constitution, and it is against the rights of conscience of a free people.

Mr. Speaker, across religious lines, the people of New Mexico and the people especially of southern New Mexico—Catholic, Protestants and people of no religion, people across cultural lines, and people across racial lines—are gathering this Saturday: this Saturday to protest, this Saturday to stand and say that the government needs to back up out of our church.

This is not a Republican issue. This is not a Democrat issue. This is an issue of the Constitution and of a freedom-loving people.

So I encourage all who are across this United States to begin to organize and stand in the streets to tell the government that enough is enough. We are meeting this Saturday, March 3, in Las Cruces, New Mexico, from 1:00 to 2:30. It will be a very large gathering. There will be speakers from both parties and from all faiths.

We think that it is time for Americans to be united together again, as one people, against a government that has become too strong.

□ 2010

#### HOUSE ENERGY ACTION TEAM HOUR

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GIBBS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. Speaker, I'm here tonight for one reason: to stand up for hardworking Americans who are spending far too much when they fill up at the pump, and I'm here for that same American who turns on the TV or reads the newspaper after a long day at work to see that Iran is threatening to cut off our oil supply out of the Middle East and to see continued inaction by this administration to discourage energy projects, energy production that would lower the price of gas here at home. These are Americans that are scared. They simply don't have the money in their pocket, in their budget to pay for these high prices, \$60 to fill up a tank of gas, \$80 to fill up the tank of gas.

I find it increasingly more difficult to explain to my constituents from rural Colorado why this government isn't advancing policies that will bring

down the prices at the pump. It pains me the look on people's faces when they tell me that they're making \$10 an hour and are paying upwards of \$4 for a gallon of gas. What are they supposed to do, Mr. Speaker, stop going to work because gas is so expensive?

We are facing a significant crisis, and it's a travesty, it's a shame. My colleagues here tonight are here to say we will not stand for it.

How do I go back home this weekend to explain to my constituents why gas prices have risen \$1.80 per gallon since this President took office? How do I explain that this administration may be willing to tap the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, which is only to be used when there is a severe energy supply disruption, instead of opening up more land for exploration, which brings me to my next point.

Mr. Speaker, this administration alleges that it has opened up vast amounts of our lands for leasing. In fact, just a few days ago, on February 23, at the University of Miami, I quote:

Under my administration, America is producing more oil today than at any other time in the last 8 years.

This is simply false, a false telling of reality. While it may be true that new production is occurring on private lands where the President can't involve his anti-energy administration, Federal lands and offshore development is far below what it has been in previous years. Let me cite to you some very startling statistics.

According to an article on E&D on Monday, just a few days ago, production of natural gas on public lands and waters in fiscal year 2011 dropped 11 percent from 2010. That's a drop of 11 percent on public lands and waters in fiscal year 2011. Oil production on Federal lands dropped 14 percent since last year, and this reduction was most significant in the gulf, which declined by 17 percent since 2010.

According to a Wall Street Journal editorial from the other day, drilling plans have historically been approved 73 percent of the time. Since the beginning of 2012, the President has only approved 23 percent.

Approval of an offshore drilling plant typically takes about 92 days right now. That's 31 days over average.

In 2000, just 12 years ago, 32 percent of our oil was from Federal lands. Why? In 2010 that number shrank to 19 percent of total U.S. production. Let me say that again. In 2000, 32 percent of our oil was from Federal lands. In 2010 that number shrank to 19 percent of total U.S. production.

We aren't opening up our Federal lands for development, and that's the reason for the significant drop. The total onshore acreage leased under this administration in 2009 and 2010 is the lowest in over 20 years.

Mr. Speaker, the President has claimed that he is opening up new offshore areas for production and more land for leases. Again, this is false. Many of these lease sales were already