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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2001, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 25 minutes, and each Member except the majority leader, the minority leader or the minority whip limited to not to exceed 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate extend beyond 9:50 a.m.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE) for 5 minutes.

SUPPORT OF THE PRESIDENT'S ENERGY PLAN

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, I recently heard a member of the Committee on Resources make an interesting statement. This individual said that the United States currently has only 3 percent of the known oil reserves in the world. The truth is that we really do not know. We do not know whether it has 3 percent or 5 percent or 15 percent or 20 percent, because for the last 10, 15, 20 years we have done absolutely no exploration. We have had no energy plan.

Mr. Speaker, think about what corporation, what military unit, what athletic team would proceed without a plan and without knowing what its assets were. This is precisely what we have done here in the United States.

I would really encourage people to support the President's energy plan because, number one, it provides a blueprint where there has been none, a plan of action that provides conservation practices and development of alternative fuels. It also provides for exploration which allows us to know what

our assets and limitations are. In the event of an international crisis, it will be critical that we know what is there.

SUPPORT FOR A DAY OF DEMOCRACY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PENCE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this morning the Ford-Carter Commission on Election Reform will release its report. One of the striking aspects of its report, and I say striking because it is sometimes rare for commissions to study an issue and offer to give the American people another day off; but I believe this is an important step in acknowledging the very important and pivotal role that the American people play in fostering democracy in this Nation. That is the election of the President of the United States, election of their Federal officials that come about in one group every 4 years. The President, in many instances, Senators and, of course, Members of the House of Representatives are running for reelection.

The Ford-Carter Commission was to assess the plight of elections in this Nation. Certainly a laboratory was the election of November 2000. Not only was Florida a prime example where things can go wrong, but as I traveled around the country listening to voters in many many jurisdictions, this is a problem that is systemic to our Nation and one that we must fix in order to enhance democracy.

We must ensure that every voter has a right to vote. We must ensure that they are knowledgeable about where to vote. We have to ensure that voters are not purged from the list that is kept by their local governmental officials. We must ensure that voters are educated

on how to vote and that they are able to utilize high technology equipment.

There are many legislative initiatives that are fostering or looking to improve the election system. I support the Dodd-Conyers legislation and I have offered legislation myself to determine the best technology that this Nation should use.

Many jurisdictions who have the resources have already begun to improve their election system. We must keep in mind, however, that the rush to judgment to improve our election system should not replace one bad system with another. So it is imperative that we create standards and I hope the Ford-Carter commission includes that.

I have a bill, H.R. 934, that has spoken to the issue of a national holiday.

Why a national holiday? One more day for us to be in the shopping malls? I think not. A day that everyone can focus on their most important responsibility, and that is the maintenance of democracy in this Nation, the upkeep of the Constitution. This will allow college students and high school students and working people from all walks of life to participate in a day of democracy. That is what we should call it.

My bill, H.R. 934, says it is a sense of Congress that private employers in the United States should give their employees a day off on the Tuesday next, after the first Monday in November in 2004 and each fourth year thereafter to enable the employees to cast votes in the presidential and other elections held on that day.

But, more importantly, we will not hear of the young mother or the young father or the hard-working individual who says, I just did not get the time to vote. I tried to get back to my polling place, but it was closed. Traffic kept me from voting. Transportation kept me from voting. My employer would not let me have time off to vote.

College students who might want to be poll workers at the polls, a most important responsibility on that day,

□ 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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