

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED  
AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS  
ACT, 2007

SPEECH OF  
**HON. TODD TIAHRT**

OF KANSAS  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
*Thursday, May 18, 2006*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 5386) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior, environment, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes:

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong support of jobs and lower energy costs for the American people. The House Appropriations Committee correctly voted to take a first step toward opening more access to natural gas in the outer continental shelf. Natural gas is an affordable, clean-burning fuel that can be safely extracted without causing harm to the environment. But there are opponents of expanded access to this domestic energy source who are trying to strip language that lifts the annual congressional moratoria on natural gas leasing and production in the OCS.

I urge my colleagues to join Mr. Peterson and Mr. Abercrombie in defeating all attempts to prohibit America from taking this small, but important, step toward energy independence. I commend Mr. Peterson for his work on this important issue and for his persistence in bringing this issue before the American people.

America is the only country in the world that has a moratorium on off-shore drilling for natural gas. While there are vast amounts of this environmentally clean energy source available in areas far off our shorelines, opponents of lifting the moratorium are standing in the way of lowering energy costs for our farmers, chemical workers, small businesses and manufacturers.

Because Americans pay as much as 600 percent more for natural gas than other countries, American businesses are often at a competitive disadvantage when trying to compete with foreign businesses.

Our farmers depend upon natural gas for everything from irrigation to food processing to nitrogen fertilizer production. When the price of natural gas is high, that translates to more economic hardship for rural America. Unlike most other businesses, farmers are not able to pass along their increased input costs to consumers. It simply means less income for them and the rural communities that depend on an agriculture economy.

Natural gas prices account for most of the cost of fertilizers, which means that as long as we refuse to open up more of our natural gas reserves and lower the costs, farmers and rural farming communities will continue to suffer. Additionally, 21 fertilizer plants in this country have closed in the past 6 years because they were no longer able to compete. High natural gas prices are closing businesses and killing jobs.

Small businesses suffer when natural gas prices are high because they have to spend more money for heating and cooling bills rather than investments in new technologies or

better wages for workers. Instead of being able to sell their products and services for less, many businesses are forced to raise their prices. And in today's economy, many small businesses are often competing with foreign competitors.

Manufacturing jobs are even more at risk for leaving if we do not address the high cost of natural gas in this country. Over 100,000 chemical jobs have been lost over the past 5 years because of high natural gas costs. These are jobs that we should not be forced to lose. Americans deserve better than a continuation of an out-dated moratorium on off-shore drilling for natural gas.

I urge my colleagues to join me in defeating the amendment to strip language that would help make America more energy self-sufficient.

TRIBUTE TO MYRTLE BEACH INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL, WINNER OF THE PALMETTO'S FINEST AWARD

**HON. HENRY E. BROWN, JR.**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
*Friday, May 19, 2006*

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the Myrtle Beach Intermediate School is one of four schools in South Carolina to have received the 2006 Palmetto's Finest Award sponsored by Carolina First and the South Carolina Association of School Administrators. This award is the highest level of recognition that a school can receive in the state and was presented for the school's accomplishments in the areas of student achievement, student leadership, service learning, school culture including physical environment, safety and relationships, communication and involvement with community, instructional methods, success interventions, innovative programs, use of technology and staff quality.

Myrtle Beach Intermediate School serves a population of 565 students, 60 percent of which received subsidized meals. The school has met Federal Adequate Yearly Progress requirements for the past 2 years, meeting 27 out of 27 subgroup objectives, and has the second highest number of subgroups in the district.

Myrtle Beach Intermediate School has received an Absolute Rating of Excellent on its state report card for the last 3 years and an Excellent Improvement rating for the past 2 years. The school has been recognized by the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee for closing the achievement gap among student subgroups.

Myrtle Beach Intermediate School has been distinguished as a South Carolina Palmetto Gold Award winner for student achievement for the last 2 years and is the recipient of the Superintendent's Award for Service Learning, the Exemplary Writing School Award, and the Red Carpet Schools Award.

Congratulations to the students, teachers and administrators of the Myrtle Beach Intermediate School for a job well done.

FREEDOM FOR ROLANDO JIMÉNEZ  
POSADA

**HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART**

OF FLORIDA  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
*Friday, May 19, 2006*

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about Rolando Jiménez Posada, a political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

Mr. Jiménez Posada is a lawyer and Director of the Democratic Human Rights Center. As a pro-democracy activist, Mr. Jiménez Posada has committed himself to portraying the true horrors of life under the tyrant in Cuba. Because of his vigorous opposition activities, the regime fired him from his job.

According to Amnesty International, Mr. Jiménez Posada has been detained and threatened numerous times over the past years. On December 10, 2001, while taking part in a peaceful celebration to commemorate the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, he and several others were beaten and pushed into police vehicles and then dumped in remote areas. Amnesty International reports that in July 2002, Mr. Jiménez Posada was threatened at his home after handing out copies of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Later, Castro's thugs told him that he would be imprisoned if he continued carrying out public activities in support of political prisoners.

Despite the horrific harassment and constant threats, Mr. Jiménez Posada never wavered in his convictions. He was arrested and thrown in the gulag on April 25, 2003. According to Amnesty International, he is still awaiting "formal charges" and a "trial."

Let me be clear, Mr. Jiménez Posada has been locked in sub-human conditions for over three years without "charges" and without even a farce of a "trial." Simply because Mr. Jiménez Posada does not subscribe to the lies and propaganda demanded by the communist dictatorship, he is locked in a miserable dungeon. Mr. Jiménez Posada is one of the many heroes of the peaceful Cuban democratic movement who are locked in the dungeons of the dictatorship for their beliefs. They are symbols of freedom and democracy who will always be remembered with respect and admiration when freedom reigns again in Cuba.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Jiménez Posada is languishing in the repulsive squalor of the tyrant's gulag because he believes in truth and freedom. It is detestable that at the dawn of the 21st century, and a mere 90 miles from our shore, honorable men and women are imprisoned in repugnant gulags for believing that all men have an inherent right to live in freedom. My colleagues, we must demand the immediate and unconditional release of Rolando Jiménez Posada and every prisoner of conscience in totalitarian Cuba.

TRIBUTE TO R.R. 'PETE' EBBING

**HON. JOE KNOLLENBERG**

OF MICHIGAN  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
*Friday, May 19, 2006*

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a valuable and respected