

can get the American people back to \$2 a gallon and so we can get the economy back on track. But they are confident that they can kill this bill.

They have no intention of bringing more energy supplies on line. In fact, this aide was quoted as saying, "We have defeated that amendment before, and we will defeat it again." They are proud of it. They admitted, at least I give them credit for that, yes, it is true, the Democrats are responsible for defeating drilling to get the energy that we need, and they are confident they are going to defeat it again.

It is almost unbelievable to me, because, as this chart says, what we need to do is bring it on. If we are short on energy, we need to bring it on. We need to bring the onshore oil on line, we need to bring the offshore oil on line, and the new refineries on line, because we are the Saudi Arabia of oil. We have more oil in three States, Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, we have more oil in those three States than all of Saudi Arabia. We have 25 percent of the world's coal in this country. We can be the Saudi Arabia of coal. We have more natural gas. We have 420 trillion cubic feet of natural gas in the Gulf of Mexico, and we can't get it.

Now, why is that? It is because of Congress. Congress created this problem. We are about the only country in the world that has made it illegal to access our own energy. Congress created this problem. Congress can solve this problem by making it legal to access our own energy reserves.

Well, that can't be done. We hear, Mr. Speaker, from the Democrat presidential nominee, Senator OBAMA, it will take 20 years before we can get any of this energy on line. Are you kidding? That is balderdash, so-to-speak. Of course, we can.

I have a bill that I am introducing this week that will fast track the permitting so we can have the Secretary of the Interior start immediately to get it online. We need to do this, the American people want us to do this, and we can get back to \$2 a gallon gas.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE CARMELO RODRIGUEZ MILITARY MEDICAL ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2007

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HINCHEY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to your attention the circumstances of Sergeant Carmelo Rodriguez and the series of extraordinary mistakes the military made which led directly to his death.

In 1997, when Carmelo Rodriguez enrolled in the Marines, a physical performed by U.S. military staff concluded that Carmelo Rodriguez had melanoma present on his right buttock. No action, however, was taken.

In March of 2000, Carmelo marked "no" on a medical report indicating he was not aware of his melanoma.

On February 5, 2003, during a prescreening for foot surgery, another military doctor made note of a so-called "birthmark" present on his right buttock. Again, no action was taken.

During March of 2005, while Carmelo was deployed in Iraq, he saw another military doctor for a growth or sore on his buttock. He was told to keep it clean and visit the doctor again when he got back to the United States, which would be 5 months later.

On November 11, 2005, Carmelo saw the same doctor and was directed to dermatology to have the so-called birthmark removed for cosmetic purposes.

The next year, several months later, April 2006, while several referrals were "lost in the system," Carmelo's so-called birthmark was bleeding and pussing constantly. He finally succeeded in seeing an appropriate doctor and was told he had stage III malignant melanoma.

Carmelo had three surgeries, received radiation and chemotherapy, but it was too late. The cancer had spread to his lymph nodes, to his liver, kidney and stomach, throughout his body. The doctors told him that if it had been caught earlier, it would have made a big difference.

Carmelo Rodriguez was a young, strong man and a dedicated member of the Armed Forces. At the age of 29, he died of a skin cancer that should have been caught much earlier by the military he was counting on. He left behind a family who loved him deeply, including his 7-year old son.

His family, like so many service men and women and their families, have been left with many unanswered questions. How could the military health system fail in such a significant and painful way? Why, after such a critical failure in health care, has the military not conducted and completed a full investigation into the circumstances that led to Carmelo's death? And how could it be possible that of all Americans, members of the military and their families are left no recourse in the face of such medical negligence?

In California, the wife and two small children of Staff Sergeant Dean Witt want to know why the military can't be held accountable when he died after routine appendicitis surgery.

Christine Lemp, whose husband, James, died after receiving questionable medical care for a stomach virus in Missouri, deserves to know why there is no recourse to holding the military accountable for his death.

Eight National Guardsmen and their families from New York City deserve

answers in the face of the medical negligence that occurred after their exposure to depleted uranium.

The Ferres Doctrine was a ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court nearly 60 years ago that denies service men and women the ability to hold the military accountable for acts of negligence, including medical malpractice. Under the Federal Tort Claims Act, Federal prisoners and even illegal aliens in the United States have the ability to seek damage from the Federal Government for medical malpractice, but members of our Nation's military still do not.

What I have done is crafted a piece of legislation to allow members of the military to seek just recourse in cases of military medical malpractice. This bill is about holding our military accountable for its actions and for its responsibility to our military members.

Carmelo's situation and this legislation speak directly to the fact that our military, including the military's health system, is spread thin by the occupation of Iraq. Our military is facing shortfalls of doctors, nurses and other health care staff across-the-board. This highlights just one of the many consequences of the decision to invade Iraq on false pretenses.

Service men and women must be on equal footing as all American civilians. I think Americans will agree that anything to the contrary contradicts the fundamental principles of our Nation. As a military veteran and Member of Congress, I believe we must match the dedication and sacrifice of our soldiers with the adequate health care they deserve and a fair avenue of recourse in the case that they do not receive that adequate health care.

I am hopeful that my colleagues will also agree and join me in support of the Carmelo Rodriguez Military Medical Accountability Act of 2008.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SHERMAN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. WELLER of Illinois addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)