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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m.

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:
Is God in the motion or in the static?
Is God in the problem or in the resolve?

Is God in the activity or in the rest?
Is God in the noise or in the silence?
Wherever You are, Lord God, be in our midst, both now and forever.
Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina 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

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to five requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

RECOGNIZING CARBON SHREDDERS

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

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the dedicated efforts of Carbon Shredders, a grassroots

environmental group based in the Mad River Valley of Vermont. Formed in the fall of 2007 by three local environmentalists, Carbon Shredders dedicates its time to curbing local energy consumption, helping Vermonters lower their energy costs, and working towards a clean energy future. The group challenges participants to alter their lifestyles in ways consistent with the goal of reducing energy consumption.

In March, three Vermont towns passed resolutions introduced by Carbon Shredders that call on residents and businesses to reduce their carbon footprint by 10 percent by 2010. In addition to the obvious environmental advantages, participating households will save \$700 each year. Carbon Shredders' membership has grown considerably in Vermont since its founding, and this group is doing tremendous work in Vermont to lead us to a carbon-free economy.

LET'S STAY AND GET THE JOB DONE

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, today the House of Representatives will adjourn for 5 weeks. It is troubling that the Democratic leadership sees no problem in taking a 5-week vacation, having failed to vote on legislation that will lower gas prices and break our dependence on foreign oil.

House Republicans have laid out a plan of exploration, alternative energy innovation, and conservation, a comprehensive strategy that pulls together this Nation's immense natural resources and our rapidly advancing technology to reduce our dependence on foreign oil and build a more prosperous country.

Let's have a vote on a comprehensive energy package. Let's show American

families that their interests are important enough for this Congress to stay here and lower gas prices.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th. Godspeed for the future careers to Second District staff members, Chirag Shah and Kori Lorick.

COMMEMORATING THE MINNEAPOLIS I-35W BRIDGE COLLAPSE

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

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Speaker, last year on August 1, 2007, at 6:05 p.m., the Interstate 35W bridge in Minneapolis collapsed into the Mississippi River. Thirteen people lost their lives, injuring nearly 100 people. The 13 victims were mothers, fathers and children.

Last year on August 1, this day, we as a Nation were united in our grief for the victims. Today, the new I-35W bridge stands almost complete over the Mississippi River. I have had a chance to tour it, and it is a good-looking bridge. But we can never forget about the victims and the lessons that we have learned from the collapse.

We will be having a memorial today in Minneapolis for the victims, and we will be celebrating the fact that we have come back and been a resilient community after this collapse.

But I believe the tragic bridge collapse serves as a national call to action for our political leaders to focus on improving our domestic infrastructure. The time is now, Madam Speaker.

LET'S SECURE AMERICA

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

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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Mr. WESTMORELAND. This morning I'm here, and if I could talk to the people of America, Madam Speaker, I would tell them that the number to the House operator is 202-224-3121, but I know I can't do that. But if I could, it would be 202-224-3121, and I would ask for Speaker PELOSI.

I would tell Speaker PELOSI that I'm not a hoax because, see, here's a quote: "This call for drilling in areas that are protected is a hoax, it's an absolute hoax on the part of the Republicans and the administration."

The American people, Madam Speaker, 73 percent of them are not a hoax. She's too busy trying to save the planet. Speaker PELOSI announced, "I'm trying to save the planet."

I hope, Madam Speaker, that if the American people could get this number that they could call the Speaker and say, "Before you save the planet, let's secure America."

Madam Speaker, we're going to adjourn today, and many in this House are going to leave for a vacation, a trip overseas, to Africa, Europe, Asia, while my constituents can't even afford to drive to a State park.

We must stay in session. We must do something to increase U.S. oil production.

HEATING OIL

(Mr. HALL of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HALL of New York. Madam Speaker, sky-high prices for gas and heating oil have taken a big bite out of family budgets. Just as we enter the home stretch of the summer driving season, these same families are bracing for increased prices in home heating oil.

Families in my district use heating oil to stave off winter cold, and too many of them are already shivering. We're not even into the heating season yet, and already prices in the Hudson Valley are over \$4.60, 70 percent more than last year.

We need to throw these families a lifeline and fix the energy crisis threatening them.

To help with the costs, I have cosponsored the HEATR Act to give qualifying families a \$500 tax credit for their heating costs over \$1,500.

To fix the markets, the majority has tried repeatedly to provide support for new technologies, increased domestic drilling, and oil releases from the SPR. Each time, the President and his allies have opposed these measures and are holding our energy solutions hostage to their insistence on old, ineffective drilling proposals.

They need to get out of D.C. and see how these prices are affecting working families, figure out how to join us, or soon we will all be out in the cold.

LET'S PASS MEANINGFUL LEGISLATION

(Mr. GINGREY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, a famous American, Will Rogers once said, "The only thing I know about American politics is what I read in the newspaper."

Madam Speaker, what I read in the newspaper this morning are these headlines: "A shadow over recess. Impasse on energy obscures victories as Dems head home."

Another headline: "Energy shadow falls over the August recess."

Reading further, I thought we had a little ray of light and encouragement in a press conference that the Speaker gave yesterday. "And, asked if she could envision a scenario where there could be a vote on new offshore drilling, she said, 'Of course.'"

"But shortly thereafter, Pelosi's office issued a written 'clarification' stating that Pelosi was not changing her position."

And the quote now, "She has no plans to bring to the floor a bill to allow drilling in protected areas."

Unconscionable, Madam Speaker. I don't know what the plan is. Maybe it's in one of the chapters of a new book that she's spent the last 3 months writing while she should have been doing something, Madam Speaker, about these high gasoline prices that are crippling this Nation. Unconscionable.

Let's stay here. Let's not adjourn. Let's pass meaningful legislation.

□ 0915

ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF I-35 BRIDGE TRAGEDY

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

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, it was one year ago today, at 6:05 p.m. this evening, that an eight-lane steel truss span bridge collapsed into the Mississippi River in Minneapolis. I'm sure we all remember that strange and surreal sight of a bridge laying in the very river it used to span and the images of vehicles that were crushed in the debris.

As a school teacher, for me the most poignant and terrifying image was that of a school bus balanced over the abyss as it was about to plunge into the steel and concrete below, but whose occupants were thankfully all unharmed.

Unfortunately, not everyone on that bridge made it home safely; 13 people were killed in the tragedy. That those numbers weren't higher was due in no small part to the hundreds of firefighters, police, emergency personnel and ordinary citizens who rushed to the aid of their fellow Americans. Their direct actions immediately following this tragedy saved lives and eased suffering.

Ordinary residents of Minneapolis displayed extraordinary courage on August 1. We are here today to note this

sad occasion and to remember those who were lost.

Construction on a new bridge is underway. It will be wider, longer, more reliable and safer. And I thank my colleague who spoke earlier, Mr. ELLISON, for his leadership on that, but it won't bring back those who tragically died.

Let us learn from this disaster and ensure it never happens again.

AMERICANS DEMAND ENERGY PLAN

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

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, we need an American energy plan and we need it now. The American people are hurting. Young families are hurting. Senior adults are hurting. Small businesses are hurting. Vern, from Jefferson County, Tennessee, is hurting.

Vern is an Iraqi war veteran. Vern has to drive from Jefferson County in Tennessee all the way into Knoxville. It's costing him over \$90 a week to drive to work. He makes \$8 an hour. He's trying to become an electrical apprentice.

Vern told me he may have to go on welfare. Vern has a young family. Vern is an Iraqi war yet. Vern wants to do what's right by his family. He has already done what's right by America. This Congress needs to do what's right for Vern and other young families in America, senior adults in America, small businesses in America.

We don't need any more excuses. We need to vote on meaningful energy legislation. We need to do it now. We don't need to go home, we need to take votes. I'm willing to stay here today and vote. We voted this week. We had time to vote to go home. We ought to have time to vote to bring down gas prices at the pump. The American people demand it, they demand it now.

HOUSE REPUBLICANS STAND BY THE PRESIDENT'S DRILL AND VETO POLICIES OF THE PAST

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

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, House Republicans claim to be interested in supporting legislation that will help reduce the price of gas at the pump, but unfortunately they have consistently opposed legislation that would directly benefit the American people.

Republicans said no to cracking down on price gouging. They said no to repealing billions in taxpayer-funded subsidies to Big Oil so that we can instead invest in renewable energy resources. They said no to legislation that would force big oil companies to either drill on the lands they already have leased or lose the leases.