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## House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. GRAVES of Georgia).

### DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,  
May 10, 2011.

I hereby appoint the Honorable TOM GRAVES to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,  
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

### MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 5, 2011, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m.

### PROTECTING CONSUMERS FROM HIGHER GAS PRICES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, 1 year after the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, Americans are paying record gas prices. In northern Virginia, gas that used to cost \$3 per gallon now costs more than \$4 per gallon.

This gas price hike is a result of instability in the Middle East and possible oil speculation and is a reminder of our dangerous dependence on foreign oil.

Sadly, our Republican colleagues are not advancing legislation to help our hard-pressed consumers. Their plan would line the pockets of Big Oil, which saw its profits skyrocket 30 percent in line with rising gas prices.

Fortunately, there are positive steps we can take to promote energy independence in America and to protect consumers: improve vehicle efficiency, boost production of domestic renewable energy, and convert oil industry tax breaks into gas price relief for our consumers.

America owns 1.5 percent of the world's oil but consumes 22.5 percent; so we can't drill our way to energy independence. The only way to end our dependence on foreign oil and reduce gas prices is by improving automobile efficiency and developing new sources of clean, domestic energy. Energy independence is going to depend on reducing our oil consumption and shifting to domestic forms of energy like wind, solar, biofuels, and gas. Energy independence will save consumers money and protect us from the instability of the Middle East.

At the end of 2010, Congress extended tax credits for biofuels and the production of wind and solar energy. These tax credits increased wind energy production by nearly 43 percent in just 2 years. So extending them is an important step to increasing the supply of domestic energy.

Under the authority of the Clean Air Act, President Obama and automakers recently announced an agreement to improve the efficiency of automobiles by 30 percent by 2016. This agreement will save consumers \$3,000 for each car purchased 5 years from now. Here is another way of looking at it: If you could save 30 percent at the pump, better vehicle efficiency would more than offset the recent spike in gas prices.

Unfortunately, oil companies and their allies here in Congress are trying to roll back much of this progress. Re-

publican Speaker BOEHNER forced through legislation which would repeal much of the Clean Air Act, hurting American consumers and undermining our national security.

Last week, the leadership in the House passed legislation to short-circuit safety rules for oil production off America's coasts, increasing the likelihood of another Deepwater Horizon catastrophe. Their legislation would also allow oil exploration that would impede naval operations off the Chesapeake Bay in Virginia. This week, they want to attempt to pass a bill allowing for more oil drilling even if it interferes with military bases or endangers coastal economies.

I do not support reckless efforts to allow unregulated oil drilling which endangers coastal economies and national security. Last week, I introduced amendments to these oil drilling bills. One would strike the anti-safety language and add a provision to repeal \$37 billion in oil company tax loopholes. The amendment would remit this money to American drivers. Averaged among licensed drivers, my amendment would give \$185 to every licensed driver in America, reducing the equivalent price of gasoline by 27 cents a gallon. The other amendment was written to protect national security. It simply requires that the Commander in Chief, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, certify that before we drill for oil off the coast of Virginia that it does not hamper national security and naval operations. I was shocked that all but a handful of Republicans voted to kill this commonsense amendment.

Since the leadership has blocked efforts to include real gas price relief in their oil drilling bills, I am introducing standalone legislation to assist consumers. The bill, entitled the Gas Price Relief Act, would terminate tax loopholes for oil companies while rebating the savings to our hard-pressed commuters throughout America.

□ 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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