

The price of gas could be and should be much, much lower than it is; but in 1995, the President vetoed legislation passed by this Congress that would have allowed oil production in less than 3,000 acres of the 19.8 million acre Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

I represent a big part of the great Smoky Mountains National Park, which is by far the most heavily visited national park in the country. Ten million visitors come there each year, and they think it is huge and beautiful, and it is. It is only about 600,000 acres in size.

This Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is 35 times the size of the Great Smoky Mountains, 19.8 million acres. Of that 19.8 million acres, 1.5 million acres is a flat brown tundra without a tree or bush or anything growing on it. It is called the coastal plain of Alaska.

The U.S. Geologic Survey says, if we drill for oil on less than 3,000 acres of that 1.5 million acre coastal plain, that there is potentially 16 billion barrels of oil there, which is 30 years of Saudi oil, yet the President vetoed that even though it can be done in an environmentally safe way.

We started years ago drilling for oil at Prudhoe Bay. The environmental extremists opposed that at that time saying it would wipe out the caribou herd. There were about 6,000 caribou at that time. Now there is over 20,000. It has been a great thing for this country.

We are far too dependent on foreign oil. Over half of our oil has to come from foreign countries now. Yet the President vetoed this which would have allowed us to get potentially 16 billion barrels of oil. In addition to that, he signed an order putting 80 percent of that Continental Shelf off limits for oil exploration and drilling. That is billions more barrels.

The price of gasoline could be much, much lower. If the American people like high gas prices, they should write the White House and thank them, because that is where the responsibility or that is where the fault lies for the high gas prices that we have in this country today.

I know there are some people who want higher prices. I know some of the environmental extremists want the gas price to go to \$3 or \$4 a gallon because then people would drive less and there would be less pollution. Some people really believe that would be a good thing.

But I can tell my colleagues it would put the final nail in the coffin of the small towns and rural areas if we let these gas prices go to those kinds of levels.

Some people say, well, that is what they are paying over in Europe. But the Europeans and all the others pay the same oil prices that we do, they just add all kinds of taxes.

So we should drill and explore for much more oil in this country, try and

become much less dependent on foreign oil, and we could easily bring down the price of gas in this country. But this administration will not do it because they are too controlled by these environmental extremists who almost always are real wealthy people, so they are not hurt by high gas prices as much as the poor and lower income and the working people of this country.

SUPREME COURT DECISION ON SCHOOL PRAYER

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, let me mention one other unrelated thing that the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PITTS) got into, and that is the Supreme Court decision on school prayer that was issued a couple of days ago.

In 1952, the U.S. Supreme Court in the case of *Zorach v. Clauser* said there is "no constitutional requirement which makes it necessary for government to be hostile to religion and throw its weight against efforts to widen the effective scope of religious influence."

I remember, about 3 years ago, William Raspberry, the great columnist for the Washington Post, wrote a column, and he asked a question. He said, "Is it not just possible that antireligious bias masquerading as religious neutrality has cost us far more than we have been willing to admit?"

□ 2200

And that is a good question, tonight, Mr. Speaker. Is it not just possible that anti-religious bias, masquerading as religious neutrality, has cost us far more than we have been willing to acknowledge?

The gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PITTS) pointed out this Congress opens every session with prayer, and yet we will not allow this to be done at school events. There was a very poor decision by the Supreme Court a couple of days ago, and I think our Founding Fathers would be shocked if they knew the extent to which people are going to in this country to keep people from saying voluntary prayers.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TOOMEY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. Speaker, on April 12, I led an hour of debate on the topic of prescription drug coverage for senior citizens. I read three letters from around the state from seniors who shared their personal stories. On the 12th, I made a commitment to continue to read a different letter every week until the House enacts reform. This week I will read a letter from Crystal Pearl Beaudry of Marquette, Michigan.

Text of the letter: "Mrs. STABENOW, We are an elderly couple—78 and 76 years "young," and we sure do complain about the costs of [prescription] drugs.

Our pension is only \$1,200 [per month] and [by] the time we pay [for] our rent and food,

eye glasses and dental work, ect., then try to pay for our drugs—which rise every time we need a refill—there is not much left!

It seem that every time we have a doctor appointment, they either add a new prescription or change it . . .

Also, at [my husband's] place of employment, if you retired before the age of 62, you lost \$200 a month. He was "laid off" at 61 and a half. So again, we lost more income. It doesn't seem fair for the elderly! We have worked all of our lives and end up this way and this is our beloved U.S.A.?

Below is a list of drugs:

	[price is per month]
Novasac	\$37.99
Prilosec	106.00
Allegra	33.29
Nitro	7.00
Premarin	22.97
Toprol	33.29
Indur	43.94
Mysoloq	18.99
Premarin Cream	40.99
Lipitor	49.99
Synlar	9.14
Aclovate	15.89
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Total cost	419.48
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Plus—coated aspirin—Vitamin C, Vitamin E, calcium pills, multivitamins, etc.

We hope that you can succeed in your campaign. Sincerely, Crystal Pearl Beaudry.

Seniors want and deserve a voluntary Medicare prescription drug benefit that is genuinely available to any senior who wants or needs it. That is why I will continue to read a letter from Michigan seniors until the House enacts real prescription drug legislation.

LACK OF SECURITY OF NUCLEAR SECRETS AT LOS ALAMOS MUST BE ADDRESSED BY CONGRESS

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to address something that has been in the paper a pretty good bit lately, the Los Alamos nuclear secrets that have apparently been missing. The reason I want to do this, Mr. Speaker, is because I am very concerned about it, and I just want to sort of retrace the steps.

If my colleagues will remember, during the Clinton administration it became apparent that this gentleman named Wen Ho Lee was stealing secrets, very important nuclear secrets from the Los Alamos lab. Because of a number of, I would say, bureaucratic hesitations, he was not investigated for a long time. They finally did investigate him and they found out that, I think he had over a thousand illegal entries on his computer. At that time Congress, in a bipartisan fashion, moved together to try to give the Department of Energy the resources that they need to improve security at Los Alamos.