

RESIGNATION FROM THE HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation from the House of Representatives:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, January 29, 2001.

Speaker J. DENNIS HASTERT,
*The U.S. House of Representatives,
The Capitol, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. SPEAKER, Attached herewith is a copy of my letter to Governor Tom Ridge of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania stating that my retirement and resignation from the United States Congress shall be effective at 2400 hours, Friday, February 2, 2001.

Sincerely,

BUD SHUSTER,
Member of Congress.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, January 29, 2001.

Governor TOM RIDGE,
*Commonwealth of Pennsylvania,
Office of the Governor, Harrisburg, PA.*

DEAR GOVERNOR RIDGE, I hereby submit my letter of retirement and resignation from the United States Congress, effective at 2400 hours, Friday, February 2, 2001.

Sincerely,

BUD SHUSTER,
Member of Congress.

WISHING THE HON. RICHARD A.
GEPHARDT, MEMBER OF CON-
GRESS, HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the House be on record as wishing the distinguished gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT) a happy birthday and many happy returns.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

MAKING CALIFORNIA WHOLE
AGAIN

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

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about my City of San Diego in the State of California and the incredible energy crisis that we are going through. Yes, we are still experiencing it. We have not yet solved it. I have heard comments from Members of this body and the other body, comments from the White House, which seem to indicate an unwillingness to take action to work with California through this crisis.

I say to my colleagues in the Senate and I say to the administration, we are all in this together. If California falls, the rest of the Nation cannot be far behind.

We are the largest State in the union. We have experienced rolling blackouts, utilities on the verge of bankruptcy. If my colleagues do not think this has had an impact on our national economy, listen to Alan Greenspan, as he testified to the Senate just last week. He said that California's crisis is not isolated. It is not an aberration, and it is a problem that the whole Nation must address and must address quickly.

We should pay heed to Mr. Greenspan. And I say to the President, I think the President is going in the wrong direction on this issue. A hands-off approach by the Federal Government, as the President has suggested, is not going to solve this problem.

Yes, we are increasing our generating capacity. Yes, we are redoubling and retripling our efforts to conserve, but an important piece of this problem has been the wholesale prices that have been charged to our utilities and our consumers. The obscene wholesale prices that have been charged.

And only the Federal Government, I say to the President, only the Federal Government, through our Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, has the authority to regulate this wholesale price.

For the President to say that California must solve its own problems ignores the fact that the generators and marketers of electricity, a seven-member monopoly, in fact, that is based in States like Texas, have run up huge, huge profits, 800 percent, 900 percent in their latest reports.

While California, and soon other parts of the Nation, will suffer. Sacramento alone, California alone cannot regulate these wholesalers, I say to the President. This is Washington's responsibility, and it is that responsibility that we must take.

I have a bill just introduced today, the California Electrical Consumers Relief Act of 2001, to take that responsibility head on. In a case like San Diego and California, where FERC has already found, through its investigation, our wholesale rates to be unjust and unreasonable, and, therefore, illegal, illegal, I say to the President, in that situation, my bill would establish what is called cost-based rates. That is the costs of generation plus a reasonable profit, for wholesale electricity, not just in California, but throughout the western States.

This is a regional problem. We must tackle it regionally. It sets those prices retroactively back to last June when this crisis started. This is not a cap. This is not an arbitrary figure.

This is a reasonable rate based on a market-based formula which allows the

generators to make a profit, but protects the consumers.

Mr. Speaker, FERC knows how to set those rates. They have the rationale. They have the procedure. They should do it, and we should order it.

For those rates, under my legislation, that were charged above the legal cost-based rates that we have in California and San Diego and have been paying since last June, my bill requires the refund of those obscene profits, the difference between what was charged us and the cost-based rates that FERC determines should be refunded, a billion dollars to the consumers of San Diego, Mr. Speaker. \$12 billion to the State of California.

These were ill-gotten gains by a cartel of the large energy generators and marketers, and that money must be returned to the Californians who are suffering. And as we watch the news and as we listen to what is going on, please remember the Governor of California and the California legislature can do a lot about our State's problems, but they cannot order refunds. They cannot set wholesale prices.

We are stuck in California with the economic disaster that that implies, a billion dollars worth of debt in San Diego, \$12 billion sucked out of our State by these power generators. We cannot look to Sacramento to solve that; only we can do it. I ask President Bush to act, and act quickly. The President cannot take a hands-off approach.

WHY DOES THE MEDIA INSIST
UPON REPORTING ACCOMPLISH-
MENTS OF THE CONGRESSIONAL
REPUBLICAN MAJORITY AND
GIVING THE CLINTON ADMINIS-
TRATION CREDIT?

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

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, late last year, a constituent asked me "why do newspapers and TV networks insist upon not reporting the accomplishments of the Congressional Republican majority, or if it is reported, the Clinton administration is given the credit?"

I replied, some do accurately report the facts, but the national media, printed and electronic, with rare exceptions, tilts noticeably to the left.

Mr. Speaker, many Americans, if not most Americans, prefer fair, objective reporting. All too often, again, with rare exceptions, double standards are applied to the detriment of conservative Republicans.

An example of this double-standard mentality is the recently-revealed Jesse Jackson saga. Had a nationally known conservative Republican religionist fathered a child out of wedlock, a universal firestorm would have likely