

discharged from further consideration of the resolution (H. Res. 238) condemning any price gouging with respect to motor fuels during the hours and days after the terrorist acts of September 11, 2001, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

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

Mr. SAWYER. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, I do not intend to object, but yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON) to explain his request.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, we also want to thank the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL), the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BOUCHER), and all of the other minority members of the Committee on Energy and Commerce for working with the majority on this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution puts the House on record in condemning any acts of price gouging in gasoline or other motor fuels occurring after Tuesday's tragic events. Since Tuesday, there have been widespread media reports about gas stations in some parts of the country jacking up gas prices to as much as \$6 per gallon, more than a 300 percent increase.

While America sat stunned and friends and relatives wondered about the well-being of their loved ones, while parts of the country struggled to evacuate government buildings and tourist attractions, while our Nation's emergency response crews mobilized, some vendors were trying to line their own pockets. If this activity is not illegal, it is certainly disgraceful.

This resolution, on a bipartisan fashion, condemns price gouging, wherever it exists. Although prices may have returned to normal, and in most cases prices never escalated, the fact is, the potential remains for consumer abuse. This type of behavior undermines consumer confidence and contributes to public uncertainty during times of crisis, and must not be tolerated.

This resolution calls on State and Federal agencies to investigate allegations of price gouging and to prosecute to the fullest extent of the law any violations of the law. There has been no disruption in our Nation's fuel supply. Production is up, stocks are full, and distribution is operating at normal levels. There is no reason, I repeat, there is no reason to jack up prices. We will get through this crisis intact, and America will be stronger than ever.

Tuesday, September 11, was a day of decision. International terrorists decided to test America's will, and Americans decided to defeat them once and for all. This is not a time to let deceptive gasoline dealers double-deal the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that we can pass this resolution by unanimous consent.

Mr. SAWYER. Mr. Speaker, further reserving the right to object, I yield to my friend, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. TAUZIN), the full committee chairman.

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding. Let me thank the chairman of the Subcommittee on Energy for the work on this bill. Most particularly let me thank the ranking member, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL), the staffs of our two committees, and all of you for the work you have done in bringing this bill to the floor.

The bottom line is this resolution condemns Americans taking advantage of other Americans in the middle of a crisis, when there is no need whatsoever to raise gasoline prices.

There is ample fuel out there for every American. This resolution condemns such taking advantage for greed purposes of other Americans in the middle of this crisis and calls for the Federal Trade Commission to commence an immediate investigation and for the prosecution under State law of those who may have violated the law.

Like all the things we have done this week in the middle of this crisis, this resolution represents incredible bipartisan effort. The drafting was done together, we bring it to the floor together, and we urge its immediate adoption.

Mr. SAWYER. Mr. Speaker, further reserving the right to object, I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KLECZKA).

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, let me thank the gentleman for yielding. Let me also recognize the chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. TAUZIN). I spoke to him numerous times this week.

I have heard about this from Members on the floor. The gentleman from Alabama indicated that in his district the gas prices went to over \$5 a gallon. The Midwest, Wisconsin and Milwaukee, has had problems throughout these last couple of years. Basically, it surrounds reformulated gas. We are trying to work with EPA and correct some of that problem.

But then, lo and behold, we have the worst tragedy to beset this Nation on Tuesday; and operators in the city of Milwaukee, like some other unsatisfactory operators, have to raise the price of gas dramatically.

This does not resolve the problem, but I think it puts those types of characters on notice that Congress is not going to stand for it and the FTC should not stand for it. And I have a further caveat or addition to the resolution, and that is, the consumers in those areas should make note of those stations and boycott them. You run a couple of these buggers out of business

and the problem is going to resolve itself.

Mr. SAWYER. Mr. Speaker, continuing to reserve the right to object, I yield further to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON).

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I hope we can pass this resolution by unanimous consent.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.Res. 238.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SAWYER. Mr. Speaker, continuing my reservation of objection, I want to thank my good friend from Texas, the chairman of the subcommittee, for his efforts on this bipartisan resolution. The vast majority of the Nation's oil producers, refiners, distributors, and retailers reacted to Tuesday's horrendous events with the same outrage and with the same attention to patriotic duty, as the rest of the Nation did.

Unfortunately, a very small and clearly contemptible minority, including some in the Midwest, chose to exploit this tragedy for selfish end. This resolution not only condemns these actions and urges justice be brought to bear, but it isolates those gougers by showing where the American people and the industry stand on this matter.

Mr. Speaker, the minority fully concurs in the unanimous consent request made by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON.) I urge adoption of the resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

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

There was no objection.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 238

Whereas the retail price of motor fuels reportedly rose by as much as 300 percent in several locations in the United States during the hours and days after the terrorist acts of September 11, 2001;

Whereas reliable reports suggest that the inventory of motor fuels in the United States was adequate during that period;

Whereas no significant disruptions in the availability of motor fuels were reported as a result of the terrorist acts of September 11, 2001;

Whereas several of the Nation's oil companies pledged to hold their fuel prices steady during the period immediately following the terrorist acts;

Whereas the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has announced that all of its member countries "remain committed to continuing their policy of strengthening market stability and ensuring that sufficient supplies are available to satisfy market needs" and "are prepared to use

their spare capacity, if deemed necessary, to achieve those goals”;

Whereas some vendors of motor fuels in the United States may have taken advantage of the uncertainty created by the terrorist acts of September 11, 2001, by knowingly charging in excess of a reasonable price for motor fuels, a practice commonly known as “price gouging”; and

Whereas price gouging is detrimental to consumer confidence and the economy of the United States, and was particularly detrimental during the hours and days after the terrorist acts of September 11, 2001: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) condemns any price gouging with respect to motor fuels during the hours and days after the terrorist acts of September 11, 2001; and

(2) urges the appropriate Federal and State agencies to investigate any incidents of price gouging with respect to motor fuels during the hours and days after the terrorist acts of September 11, 2001, and to prosecute any violations of law discovered as a result of the investigations.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PRESERVING VIABILITY OF UNITED STATES AIR TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Committee on Ways and Means be discharged from further consideration of the bill (H.R. 2891) to preserve the continued viability of the United States air transportation system, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, I yield to the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG), the chairman of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure for a brief explanation of the pending legislation.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend, the ranking member on the committee, for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, on September 11, 2001, the FAA grounded every air carrier in this country within a 2-hour period. This is absolutely necessary for the safety and protection of our country and our people. Remember, September 11, this tragic incident, but the aviation industry immediately and cooperatively obeyed the order, without any resistance or debate. As private industries, they put the welfare of the American people above their own profit and their own welfare.

Unfortunately, we are now facing a serious crisis that may result in a severe reduction in our air transportation system.

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We will be, in the very near future, facing layoffs of the airline industry, reductions in flights. And those in Texas will not fly; may you walk and may you die in the desert. There will be reduced capacity and other significant effects, because the air industry in this Nation is one of the most important parts of our commercial fleet.

The ripple effect on our economy will be enormous. We are an economy built on the ability to move goods and people at a reasonable cost. The purpose of H.R. 2891 is to keep our U.S. air transportation system alive and able to serve its important functions for our country, because we shut down the industry.

The bill will provide an immediate ability to the President to provide loans and other assistance to U.S. air carriers, and also to compensate those carriers who can document direct losses because of the actions of our government to protect our national security. This authority would only be for 6 months. For 6 months, ride your horses. It is to provide short-term assistance. Any claim for losses has to be documented and proven. The current crisis requires this action be taken as quickly as possible to preserve not only the financial viability of the airlines, but also to protect the general public welfare.

May I suggest, those that may object to this, understand one thing: rail, road, ship and air. I am the chairman of the Committee on Transportation, and if my colleagues decide not to support this bill, then my colleagues suffer the facts, because my colleagues will not be able to fly. And I said, ride your horses, paddle your canoes, and go where you think you may go. But the airline industry, and I am the chairman of this committee, is in serious, serious trouble. Not because of today, necessarily, not because of the past, but because this tragedy was not their doing. And to have someone object to this means that they say no longer is air transportation important. And let me tell my colleagues, those that want to fly, fly; but do not do it just with wings from the airplanes, fly with yourself. Try flapping your arms; you are not going to get there. You are not going to get there. And that includes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG).

My colleagues have to understand what I am saying. That is not about corporations, it is not about Social Security, it is not about the financial institutions, it is about the economy of this country. I studied this, and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) studied it in his time.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, further reserving the right to object. The events of Tuesday, as the chairman has already expressed, have thrown the airline industry, as the first line of target

of terrorism, into an absolute tailspin. The industry has been shut down. It has no revenue streaming in, it has costs going out. It has to pay its pilots, its flight attendants, its mechanics, baggage handlers, and other personnel. They are under contract to do so. They have no revenue coming in. When air travel does resume, two revenue streams have already been denied the airlines: mail and cargo aboard passenger aircraft. Airlines are collectively losing some \$340 million to \$400 million a day. They have already lost over \$1 billion, and over this weekend will accumulate losses of up to \$5 billion. The industry could be in complete financial liquidation within a week or two.

What we have proposed in this legislation is an authorization from, listen to the language, from funds made available in subsequent acts. This is not money coming out of the appropriation we approved earlier in the day. It will have to be approved in subsequent acts, and as the chairman has already said, the airlines will have to submit specific showing of losses to the President of the United States, resulting from events that occurred on the 11th of September, and subsequently, and will have to demonstrate that their losses also resulted from the ground stop on aviation service ordered by the Secretary of Transportation.

The reach of this disaster is nationwide, and this is a \$600 billion sector of our national economy. It underpins all the rest of the national economy. It gives us the greatest mobility in the world. Two-thirds of all the world's air travel occurs in the United States' airspace. Airlines today cannot get access to the lines of credit that they have lined up at financial institutions because the draw and the demand on those financial institutions is so great that they are reluctant to release the dollars available to them in lines of credit.

Secondly, financial institutions have put all the airlines on credit watch.

Third, their insurance, their liability insurance, has doubled overnight, and they carry insurance against such tragedies.

Fourth, when the terrorists struck, airlines had \$35 billion in aircraft and aircraft engine orders, positioned with Boeing, Pratt & Whitney, and GE. They are going to cancel those orders and the effect is going to ripple throughout the whole national economy, with layoffs from the East Coast to the West Coast and from the north and to the south.

What we are proposing to do tonight is to get an authorization in place so that when financial markets open on Monday, airline stocks do not tank and airlines do not go under and they shut down forever. That is what this is about.

Yes, it is on short notice; no, we did not go through the hearing process. We