

sacrifice, because having experienced two fire fighters' loss of life last year and again having fire fighters up here this week with us, we join in that.

I rise today, though, to talk about the energy crisis affecting our country and steps that need to be taken to increase our exploration, production, and delivery of energy. I want to try and cool some of the rhetoric that I believe is slowing down the process of trying to find a comprehensive energy solution.

First, at this moment, insufficient supplies of natural gas are threatening to produce widespread shortages, not only in California and the West, but throughout our country this summer.

This shortage can be traced to the oversupply of natural gas 2 years ago. Everyone likes to point the finger at energy producers when prices are high; but no one seems to care when, a year or two ago, we could not even give natural gas away. Those extremely low prices 2 years ago stopped exploration activities and forced many natural gas producers to cap marginally-producing wells.

The laws of supply and demand work, and it did not stay out of balance for too long. We thought that cheap natural gas would last forever in the building spree; and with our encouragement, because it is safer and cleaner, new natural gas generators highlighted this belief that natural gas would be cheap.

So today around our country, the demand for natural gas has far outstripped the supply, and we need to respond to this shortfall.

Staying in front of our energy needs is the key to avoiding high cost. Exploration and production of domestic energy sources are the keys to staying in front along with more efficient use of our domestic energy.

While we are behind on natural gas production, I need to remind everyone we will soon also be behind on oil production as well. Last summer's high gasoline prices are only a taste of what is to come. Already we have heard that OPEC plans to cut production in an attempt to maintain a stable world oil price. Demand in this country easily outstrips the supply, and we have no cushion to fall back on during times of a tight supply.

It is for these reasons that we must take steps to stay ahead of our oil curve and tap more domestic sources of production. Specifically, I have agreed to cosponsor H.R. 39, the Arctic Coastal Plain Domestic Energy Security Act of 2001. The coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, known as ANWR, is said to contain between 5.7 and 16 billion barrels of recoverable oil. If the upper 16 billion barrels of recoverable reserve can be extracted, it represents 20 years of oil which we will not have to import from other parts of the world. I want to emphasize that these reserve numbers are also considered very conservative.

As a Member of Congress from Houston, Texas, I know firsthand that the drilling technologies have continued to improve. In fact, we have been and continue drilling and production in the Gulf of Mexico. Technology has allowed us to go deeper and also do it more efficiently and safely.

As equipment and techniques advance, the percentage of recoverable oil will also increase. Industry now has the technology to reduce the amount of land impacted by new oil development.

North Slope drillers routinely drill directional wells that reach out 4 miles from the surface of the rig. That means that one production pad on the surface can produce from 64 square miles of subsurface oil fields. So you do not have the imprint of that facility.

The decision to support drilling in ANWR was not made just on the need to utilize energy resources alone. I have been to ANWR. I have seen the environment and have witnessed firsthand the diversity of life that lives there, even during August, Mr. Speaker, and met with the Alaskans that live the closest to the ANWR refuge.

I would not support this legislation if I did not feel that we could confidently with our ability safely extract oil in an environmentally sound manner.

Careful development of ANWR under strict regulatory guidelines can provide our Nation with a vital resource while minimizing the environmental impact on the coastal plain and its wildlife.

Our experiences on Alaska's North Slope provide strong evidence that oil and gas development in nearby ANWR would pose little threat to the ecology of the coastal plain. The record is clear. Air quality is good. The drilling wastes have been well managed, and wildlife and their habitat have been minimally impacted.

The debate on this issue has been heated and will get even more heated. But many of the arguments being made in opposition to opening ANWR were raised at the time Prudhoe Bay and the North Slope development was being considered. Today we are much better than we were those many years ago. Most experts have acknowledged that Prudhoe Bay has been, and continues to be, a success story.

I keep going back to the same point, we can extract this vital resource while at the same time safeguarding the environment and other resources in that region. After careful consideration, the answer should be yes. Extracting oil from ANWR will have positive benefits for American consumers.

I do not dismiss the concerns in the environmental community, but many of the arguments again were made at the same time when we were doing it for North Slope. The environment has been safeguarded on North Slope. I believe with advances in drilling technology, we will be safer with ANWR.

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will join me in cosponsoring H.R. 39. It is time to move towards energy independence in our country.

#### NURSING SHORTAGE

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

Mrs. CAPPs. Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring to the attention of the House the impending shortage of nurses. I am one of three nurses currently serving in Congress. Before I was elected, I served the people of Santa Barbara as a public health nurse over 20 years.

My experience gives me a distinct perspective on nursing issues. I know firsthand the challenges facing the nursing profession and the consequences if we fail to meet them. Nurses are the first line of defense in our health care system, and the importance of this role cannot be overstated.

Today the nursing community is facing a dire situation. There is currently an ongoing shortage of nurses in the work force. In the past, this type of shortage has been resolved when pay and benefits have risen enough to attract new nurses into the field. But that is not the case this time. While some compensation levels have been rising, these improvements have not attracted enough nurses back into practice.

We are also facing a looming crisis in a profession that will strain the health care system and threaten the quality of care. We have an aging nursing work force and a dwindling supply of new nurses. Right now, the average age of employed registered nurses is 43 years. By 2010, 40 percent of the RN work force will be over 50.

Unfortunately, and in contrast, the number of young nurses is decreasing. Under 30 years of age, it has now declined by 41 percent. With this combination, we are facing an incredible shortfall of well-trained, experienced nurses in all fields.

To make matters worse, this will happen just as the 78 million members of the baby boom generation begin to retire and need an even greater amount of health care.

In my home State of California, the problem is even worse. Less than 10 percent of the RN work force back home is under the age of 30, and nearly a third are over the age of 50. California already ranks 50th among the States in RNs per capita.

Part of the problem is that the nursing work force is so homogeneous. The vast majority of nurses are white women. Fifty years ago, a smart young woman had only a handful of career options available to her, including nursing. But as our society's views on women's equality have progressed, we have not escaped the perception that nursing is women's work.

As young women have explored different careers, very few young men have entered the nursing work force to replace them. So right now less than 6 percent of the nursing work force is comprised of men.

Likewise, even though the percentage of minorities in our national work force has arisen close to 25 percent, minorities still only represent 10 percent of RNs.

In order to deal with this looming shortage, we are going to need to address a number of issues and to be very creative in our solutions. We need to draw more people into the profession, particularly the young men and women at the high school level who are just choosing their career paths. We need to reach out to minorities and disadvantaged youth. We need to retain those nurses who are already in the work force. We need to make sure we have enough nursing school faculty, mentors and preceptors to properly educate and train our work force.

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I have been working with various working groups, with Senator JOHN KERRY, and other Members of Congress to develop a set of measures that can help deal with both the immediate and the long-term problems that we face. Soon I will be introducing comprehensive legislation to address these shortages.

This legislation will include proposals to improve access to nursing education, to create partnerships between health care providers and educational institutions, to support nurses as they seek more training, and to improve the collection and analysis of data about the nursing workforce.

But we will also need to look at creative new ideas to truly address this problem. In my home town, Santa Barbara, Cottage Hospital and Santa Barbara City College have joined with San Marcos High School to create a health academy. This is a perfect example of the kind of creative solution we need.

In their sophomore year, 60 students will start taking health-care courses taught by professionals from the hospital and college. When they graduate, they can be certified nursing assistants or continue their nursing education in SBCC's 2-year nursing education RN program. For its first class in this high school, there are already 128 applicants for those 60 spaces.

This program can serve to recruit young men and women into the nursing profession as well as change misperceptions among other students and teachers about the value of a nursing career. With support, this program could be replicated in other high-need areas, or other types of public-private partnerships could be developed.

The challenges we face in the nursing and public health communities are becoming more and more evident and the

need for national action on them is equally evident.

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will join me in this effort so we can achieve a bipartisan solution to these problems.

#### FOOD SAFETY IN THE UNITED STATES AS IT RELATES TO THE MEAT INDUSTRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. GANSKE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GANSKE. Mr. Speaker, just as a courtesy to whoever may follow, I will probably take about 20 minutes on this special order.

Mr. Speaker, you cannot help but notice a myriad of headlines touting gloom and doom on the horizon for our Nation's future. Whether it is foot-and-mouth disease threatening the world's livestock, the downturn in the world's economy, or the energy crisis that is jacking up home heating costs to really high levels, many of my constituents wonder where to turn for answers. Well today, Mr. Speaker, I would propose that America take a second look at its backbone, agriculture, as agriculture relates to some of these issues.

So the first topic I would like to discuss is food safety. The United States has one of the safest food supplies in the world. Prior to coming to Congress I was a physician and I am a father and I have a very keen interest in the issue of food safety. A few years ago, I was on an overseas surgical mission; and instead of just bringing back good memories, I brought back a case of encephalitis which I may have picked up from food overseas.

When I came to Congress, I cosponsored and helped pass the Food Quality Protection Act. It established new safety standards for the use of pesticides and required the EPA to use sound science in making its decisions. We all have a great stake in helping to ensure that our food supply is safe.

There have been concerns about the safety of food with the spread of two diseases in Europe related to the livestock and meat industry: Foot-and-mouth disease and mad cow disease. Both of these diseases, believe me, are being taken very seriously by the United States Department of Agriculture, the USDA, and the livestock industry. A little bit of background is in order.

Foot-and-mouth disease does not pose a threat to humans, but it is devastating to livestock herds. The disease attacks cattle, swine, sheep, deer, goats and other cloven-hoofed animals. The disease is caused by a virus that is very contagious and can be spread by physical contact between infected animals and people, animals and other

material. The virus can persist in contaminated fodder in the environment for up to 1 month depending on the temperature and various other conditions.

The disease causes blisters in the mouth and on the feet of the animals. It causes them to drool. It causes them to be lame. Let me repeat, the disease does not affect humans. This disease causes debilitation if the animal lives, and it frequently results in death to the animal. The disease is not new, and it has been fairly widespread around the world. It was not, however, prominent in areas with extensive agricultural trade with the United States until the recent outbreak in Great Britain and Northern Europe.

Let me make a point. There are currently no cases of foot-and-mouth disease in the United States. But historically there have been nine outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease in our country. The last outbreak in the United States occurred in 1929. According to the Animal, Plant and Health Inspection Service, livestock animals in the United States are highly susceptible to the foot-and-mouth disease virus. If an outbreak were to occur in our country, it would be essential to detect and eradicate it immediately. If it were to spread across the country, our livestock industry could suffer enormous economic losses. The disease could spread to deer and other wildlife making it even more difficult to eradicate, so it is crucial that we keep the virus from entering the United States.

We have always prohibited infected animals and infected animal by-products from entering the country, but in response to the recent serious outbreak in Europe, the USDA has taken the following actions: Number one, USDA has temporarily prohibited the importation of swine and other ruminants, and any fresh swine or ruminant meat and other products of swine and ruminants from the European Union.

Number two, USDA is preventing travelers entering the United States from carrying any agricultural products, particularly animal products, that could spread the disease. The USDA has mandated that travelers report any farm contact to Customs and USDA officials. All baggage is subject to inspection with penalties for violations of up to \$1,000.

Number three, the USDA has established a team of 40 academic and government experts to evaluate, monitor and assist in containment efforts.

Number four, the USDA has placed additional inspectors and dog teams at airports and other ports of entry to check incoming passengers, luggage and cargo. They have stationed USDA officials worldwide to monitor reports of the disease.

Number five, the USDA has conducted a widespread public education campaign to make the public more