

health agencies can no longer hide their heads in the sand and refuse to acknowledge that we have an epidemic and that in our well-meaning desire to protect the public at large from infectious diseases, that we may have created this epidemic of a chronic and life-long disease.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 622, HOPE FOR CHILDREN ACT

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 107-67) on the resolution (H. Res. 141) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 622) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand the adoption credit, and for our purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

ENERGY PRICES

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

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to join my colleagues in addressing the serious issue of rising energy costs.

Today in Rhode Island, the average price of one gallon of regular unleaded gasoline reached \$1.77, almost 5 cents above the national average and a record high in my State.

Thousands of my constituents depend on their automobiles to get to their jobs each day and simply cannot afford the drastic increase in gas prices that they are being forced to pay.

Additionally, this problem has a significant impact on Rhode Island's economy which relies heavily on summer tourism.

Increased gasoline costs threaten to discourage people from summer travel, which would have a disastrous effect on our communities.

Mr. Speaker, we need a solution to this problem now. I have contacted the administration and insisted that any energy strategy that they develop must help American consumers by lowering gas prices.

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Both the President and the Vice President have extensive experience and contact in the oil industry. I am certain that, if properly motivated, they could find a way to lower gasoline prices and bring relief to Americans that have been hardest hit by this price spike.

Our national energy strategy must also incorporate technologies to improve vehicles' fuel efficiency standards in order to reduce our runaway consumption of oil and gasoline.

For example, by requiring SUVs to simply meet fuel efficiency standards

of passenger cars would reduce U.S. oil consumption by 1 million barrels per day, approximately the daily estimated oil yield from drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Even though the technology currently exists to make our Nation's cars and SUVs more fuel efficient, Congress has blocked the establishment of higher standards since 1995.

Mr. Speaker, I intend to work with my colleagues in Congress to increase fuel efficiency standards, not only to cut our consumption of oil and gasoline, but also to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide, the greatest contributor to global warming.

I am optimistic that the United States will take advantage of our current energy debate to develop a forward-thinking plan for the future. We must establish an energy strategy that addresses short-term and long-term problems, is environmentally responsible, and truly benefits the American consumer as well as the future of this world.

ENERGY CRISIS AND FUEL PRICES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GRAVES). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, in my district in New Jersey, the average price for unleaded gasoline is \$1.72 this month. The Energy Information Administration report shows that the average price in New Jersey was \$1.14 at this time last year. This is a 50 percent increase in one year, yet I assure my colleagues that New Jersey is not seeing the worst of the gasoline price increases. Prices in many parts of California are well over \$2, and price fluctuations in the Midwest have been dramatic.

But, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about the energy crisis and the increase in gasoline prices, President Bush's answer has been, and he delivered this just last Friday, he said, "The best way to make sure that people are able to deal with high energy prices is to cut taxes, is to give people more of their own money so they can meet the bills, so they can meet the high energy prices."

Mr. Speaker, I understand that we just heard today that tomorrow President Bush's tax cut bill, the reconciliation bill, is going to come to the floor. But I assure my colleagues that that is not the answer to gasoline prices.

He is talking about a tax cut so that Americans can go out and pay the \$2 to \$3 per gallon price of gasoline. But let us look at this. The President proposes that Congress act quickly to pass the tax cut so the Federal Government can refund American families a modest tax refund so they can in turn put gasoline in their vehicle.

Well, he is not proposing a solution. He is just again displaying a lack of leadership and his alliance essentially with the oil and petroleum industry. What he is proposing with his tax cut is just another way to assist the industry, his friends.

The interesting thing, Mr. Speaker, is that, if one looks at the message that President Bush is delivering today and one compares it to the one he delivered when he was a candidate last year, in January 2000, when heating oil prices were soaring in key campaign States and spot prices were \$27 per barrel, then Candidate Bush said, "What I think the President ought to do is he ought to get on the phone to OPEC, the cartel, and say we expect you to open your spigots."

Well, why is President Bush changing his position. Even today, Vice President CHENEY was out saying he does not support increases in OPEC oil production. The Secretary Abraham was quoted a couple weeks ago saying that he was not going to give into or lower himself, I think the word was, to talk to OPEC about oil production because that would somehow lower his quality, his status as Energy Secretary.

President Bush has also said he will not release any oil from the SPR, the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. Both the Clinton administration and the first President Bush, his father, George W.'s father, successfully released oil from the SPR, from the reserve, to calm energy markets.

In fact, President Bush's decision not to take action, I think, is essentially unilateral disarmament in talks with oil producing countries. We know last year President Clinton was very effective, I thought, in using the SPR as a tool, if you will, to try to bring prices down.

The other thing that President Bush has talked about as a long-term solution, of course, is to build more refining capacity. But I think he misses the point because it does not help the consumer today. The interesting thing about Bush's policy and CHENEY's policy is that they are not talking about the problem that Americans face today. We have blackouts. We have oil prices, gasoline prices rising dramatically. American motorists are spending too much on gasoline. They want a solution now.

The President talked refineries, but he did not talk about the effect of refinery consolidation. While the number of refineries has decreased, the refinery capacity has increased. Part of the problem that we witness today is this consolidation, is the size of the refinery has increased. Any problem in the refinery, like a fire, for example, that affects production has a greater impact on supply and price.

I just wanted to mention I have a number of speakers tonight who are joining me, my colleagues on the