

MISPLACED PRIORITIES

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

Mr. GARY MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I had not planned on speaking today but it reminds me of a group of comedians coming forward today, and blaming President Bush for the energy crisis.

He has been in office a few months, yet the previous administration, President Clinton, did nothing about our energy problems. We became more reliant on foreign oil. We became more reliant on other products to provide services for our people, rather than providing for ourselves.

This Nation has changed dramatically. When I was a child, a person went to turn the light switch on and the lights came on. When they went to fill their gas tank, it was reasonable to fill their gas tank. In those days, we swatted flies and we poisoned rats. Today we set aside habitat for flies and rats. And who pays for it? Private property owners have to pay the price of setting their property aside for some stupid endangered species that some wacko Democratic politician wants to preserve.

In the words of the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TRAFICANT), beam me up, too. Both of us need to be out of here.

This is crazy. And we talk about big oil. If we had enough oil, we would not have enough energy to provide an argument for these people to complain about. So if we have less oil, they can complain more about Republicans not providing oil.

Wake up, America. There is something seriously wrong and it is the Democratic Party, excluding the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TRAFICANT) who has finally learned what real world life is like. Buy America; provide energy; close our borders. It is realistic.

Two years ago and three years ago, this body realized there is something wrong with the IRS. In 1913, when we started the Tax Code, it was 11,400 words. The Tax Code today is over 7 million words.

In 1914, people voluntarily paid taxes. The government did not force them to pay taxes. They came forward and said our government needs help. We need to pay taxes.

350,000 good Americans paid taxes the first year and the IRS audited every doggone one of those people who paid voluntary taxes. Beam me up again.

Now we realize the IRS is out of control. There is a problem with this country, and it is the way people vote. If we want energy, let us provide more oil. If we want gas, let us provide more gas. We have not built a refinery in the United States for 22 years.

We have 15 different formularies or 19 formularies required in different States. In California in the L.A. basin,

where I come from, we cannot bring gas from Northern California to our area. We cannot bring it from Washington, from Oregon, from Arizona, from Colorado, from Nevada, because it does not meet our standards. So when we have a problem with refineries, guess what? We have no gas; and yet we are more concerned about preserving flies and rats than we are providing energy for the American people that we are supposed to represent.

Let me say, people are part of the environment, too, and they are at the top of it as far as I am concerned. If we happen to save a rat in the process of saving a human life, so be it. But if we have to poison that rat to save a human life, as far as I am concerned that rat is in trouble.

Last year in California, Fish and Wildlife in October said we need to set habitat aside for the Stevens kangaroo rat, for the gnat catcher and for Longhorn sheep, and they set 2.9 million acres of land aside in California and it looked like a checker board. Now this is not where they live. This is habitat that would sustain those critters. If one does not own habitat, guess what? You own associated habitat. And then we complain that we cannot provide affordable housing for people.

What do we want to do? We want to give them a section 8 voucher from the government.

When one buys a new house in this country, on average 35 percent of the costs of that house are government fees. Now, you tell a young person they are going to go out and buy a \$100,000 home, if they can find one, and \$35,000 of the price of that home is fees to the government? Beam me up again, I would say to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TRAFICANT). Something is seriously wrong with this Nation.

Then we say our children cannot afford to live in our communities. We need to change the direction of this country and we need to be more responsible and accountable to the people that we represent.

How do working people get helped in this Nation? By everything that can be done to engender the best economic environment for businesses, because when businesses do well, guess what happens? They give their employees raises because they need them. They give them better benefits. They give them more vacation pay.

When we create recession because of wacko bureaucratic laws that we pass around here and businesses suffer, guess what they do? They lay people off. People are lucky to work 40 hours a week. They are not surprised if they lose their benefits and have their vacation pay cut.

We need to change the direction of this Nation and start representing the good for the American people.

ENERGY IN THE WESTERN UNITED STATES

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Madam Speaker, that was an extraordinary speech by the gentleman from California (Mr. GARY MILLER) who preceded me in the well, and I will offer a little different perspective on what is going on in energy in the Western U.S.

It is Memorial Day weekend and all across the country Americans and their families are pulling up to the pump and surprise, prices are up, way up. But there is no market manipulation.

The deafening silence of the Bush administration and the runup on gas prices might have something to do with who supported their last campaign but I would not allude that on the floor.

There is no market manipulation. Exxon Mobil, profits \$15.9 billion last year, profits up 102 percent in one year, there is no market manipulation. There is no role for the Federal Government here, except to enable them to drill for more oil and to cut their taxes. That is what the Bush energy plan proposes.

Now, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARY MILLER), I am very surprised that he did not want to talk about some of these things.

Yesterday I talked about Reliant Energy. Reliant Energy, based in Houston, Texas, profits up 1,800 percent in one year; bought a few generating plants in California. It was revealed in the San Francisco Chronicle on Sunday, with interviews with some of their plant operators, that the plant operators were linked by telephone to their commodity trader speculators and the commodity trader speculators watched the charts and when the price of energy went up, they said crank up the plants. When the price of energy went down, they said crank down those plants. They did this on as frequently as 10-minute increments.

That destroys the plants, obviously does not provide reliability or keep the lights on for the people in California and the Western United States, but it is incredibly profitable; 1,800 percent runup in profits in one year. But there is no manipulation.

The hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil folks at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission appointed by President George Bush, Mr. Hebert, the chairman; the Secretary of Energy; the vice president of the United States, they do not think there is any market manipulation or profiteering or price gouging going on here. It is normal for a company to increase its profits by manipulating the market and driving up its profits 1,800 percent one year.

Now today in the Los Angeles Times, closer to the gentleman who preceded