

CALIFORNIA AND THE WEST COAST ELECTRICITY MARKET HAS BEEN ILLEGALLY MANIPULATED

(Mr. FILNER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, evidence continues to mount that California and the west coast electricity market has been illegally manipulated, and consumers are entitled to billions of dollars for illegal overcharges since last summer.

We just heard about the need for production. Let me tell my colleagues what is happening to plants in California. Last week in sworn testimony to the State senate, three employees of the Duke energy plant in my district in Chula Vista, California, testified that they took the plant out of production for economic reasons. That is to boost the price of electricity at times, including the worst emergencies that were declared in California. At stage 3 alerts, the generators were taken down. They were told to throw away spare parts, so it would take longer to correct any problems that did appear. The manipulation of the market is clear. The illegal manipulation of the market is clear.

Mr. Speaker, all my colleagues should sign the discharge petition at the well this morning to make sure that we get a vote on restoring equanimity to the electrical markets of California, and consumers get refunds for illegal prices.

PRICE CAPS ARE A BAD IDEA

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, even though they violate every principle of free market economics, every principle of common sense, even though they would not produce one drop of oil or one watt of electricity, some Members keep calling for price caps.

Many of us have been trying to explain to the government-has-all-of-the-answers crowd why price caps are a bad idea. But, Mr. Speaker, some Members would rather score political points by claiming to have an easy answer, even though they will really be harming the consumers they pretend to be defending.

The Department of Energy released a study that showed that price controls would cause the California blackouts to get worse. There is no easy fix to this energy crunch, and we should not trust anyone who tells us there is. Only through boosting production and greater conservation will we have more supply and lower prices. There is no other way.

PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS WILL NOT GENERATE LAWSUITS

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to hear this controversy being expressed as we cannot do this and we cannot do that. Although I am here to talk about the Patients' Bill of Rights, I believe that the industry recognizes that something must be done to help Americans with the energy crisis, and I believe cooler heads would welcome the opportunity to put a moratorium on pricing.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the misrepresentation of the Patients' Bill of Rights by its opponents, and I want to say there is no evidence that the insured will sue employers recklessly. There is no evidence that there will be frivolous lawsuits by those who are insured. I know because I come from the State of Texas that has had a Patients' Bill of Rights for almost 5 years.

There is evidence that the Patients' Bill of Rights, the Ganske-Dingell bill, will provide every American the right to choose their own doctors and restore the patient and physician relationship, that it will cover all Americans with employer-based health care insurance, that it features all external reviews of medical decisions conducted by independent and qualified physicians and not HMO bureaucrats, that it will hold HMOs accountable. That is the evidence. We need to pass a real Patients' Bill of Rights.

RULE OF LAW PROHIBITS HARVESTING OF STEM CELLS FROM HUMAN EMBRYOS

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a strong advocate of the rule of law and the right to life. That is why I urge the administration to faithfully execute the 1996 law adopted by this Congress prohibiting the use of taxpayer dollars to finance the harvesting of stem cells from human embryos. Just because the last administration tried to trample this law through regulations is no excuse for this administration to fail in its oath to faithfully execute the laws adopted in this Congress. The clear language of the 1996 law, the high principle of the sanctity of human life and the enormous promise of adult stem cell research all argue that this President and this administration should choose life.

PUT MEDICAL DECISIONS BACK IN THE HANDS OF DOCTORS AND PATIENTS

(Ms. MCCOLLUM asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, let us put medical decisions back in the hands of doctors and patients and ahead of special interests and their slick TV commercials. Let us pass a strong Patients' Bill of Rights.

In my home State of Minnesota, I worked very hard, and in Minnesota, like many other States, we have strong patient protection laws. Those who are covered under Minnesota law have access to specialists when they need them. Every American deserves that right. No one should have to jump through hoops or swim a sea of red tape to get the doctor they need when they need to see one. A patient's doctor knows when they need to see a specialist, and Americans should not have to wait for approval by some profit-driven bureaucrats.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the bipartisan Ganske-Dingell bill. It is time for sound, responsible managed care reforms and meaningful patient protection.

THE RIGHT APPROACH TO ENERGY

(Mr. STEARNS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, today Californians are experiencing rolling blackouts, rising energy costs and out-of-control gasoline prices. I fear that this will happen in the other States if we are not careful. The solution to our current energy crisis is simple, choice and competition, not more regulation and price controls like the discharge petition that the Democrats are talking about.

Governor Davis, with the support of environmentalists and government control advocates, raised barriers and actively sought to prohibit the construction of new power plants. Now the Democrats in Washington want to make the Gray Davis approach to energy the national approach to our energy here in Washington.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear what the results will be if they achieve their goal. What is happening in California will happen in the rest of the country. Blackouts will roll from California all of the way to the eastern seaboard. From family to farmer, all Americans will be affected. We do not want this to happen.

We need to have choice and competition. Let there not be a reoccurrence. Let us take the right approach to energy, and work to increase production, reduce regulation and encourage conservation.