In the House of Representatives, June 27, 2001

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, no one can claim that one can know where we are going to solve the national energy problem, that we are capable of supporting society as we want to support, without a balanced comprehensive energy policy for our Nation.

By importing nearly 60 percent of our energy, we need a balanced, comprehensive energy policy in this Nation. It is time to take action now.

Mr. Speaker, California’s fast-paced society is not capable of supporting itself through energy shortages and rolling blackouts. Neither is the rest of the country. However, since Governor Gray Davis has been showing more interest in his political consultants rather than his constituents, the crisis in his homeland has begun spreading like a catastrophe and has put the Nation on the brink of engulfing other States.

It is time to take action now.

SUPPORT THE BIPARTISAN PATIENTS’ BILL OF RIGHTS

Mr. BROWN of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mr. Speaker, let us get down to basics. Some health plans systematically obstruct, delay and deny care. Some health plans provide excuses instead of coverage. The bipartisan Patients’ Bill of Rights has enough teeth in it to deter health plans from cheating their enrollees and enough definition in it to protect health plans and employers from frivolous lawsuits.

Yesterday, my Republican colleagues, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. FLETCHER), the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. TAUZIN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS), introduced legislation endorsed by President Bush and written by the largest insurance companies in the country. It does not give enrollees the right to sue. The language is drafted so that the right to sue cannot actually be exercised.

The Republican bill is a sham. I ask President Bush to work with us to put insurance interests aside, to put campaign contributions from insurance interests aside, to work with us in the bipartisan Patients’ Bill of Rights. That is the bill that protects patients. That is the bill that restores the patient-physician relationship.

SUPPORT PRESIDENT’S SOUND ENERGY PLAN

Mr. RYUN of Kansas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.

Mr. RYUN of Kansas, Mr. Speaker, President Bush has outlined what I think is a sound energy policy that is both forward thinking and sensible, but I oppose this plan sound like a broken record, accusing the President of being anti-environment.

The assertion that we must choose between sound energy policy and healthy environment is simply not true. As an example, we need to look no further than the clean air standards set for years by breakthroughs and regulations for fuel resulted in refineries using additives that produced clean air, but polluted the groundwater. That is, until the development of ethanol.

Ethanol is a biofuel that is produced from corn and grain sorghum. It protects our quality of air by reducing tailpipe emissions and greenhouse emissions. And as an added bonus, ethanol can provide help for our economy, especially our American farmers, and not for OPEC. I, for one, would rather depend upon the good graces of a Kansas farmer than foreign oil producers.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the President’s sound energy policy.

REDUCING SUPPLY TO INCREASE PRICES

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

Mr. TIERNEY, Mr. Speaker, people this morning have been talking about the energy situation, and I think it is important to talk calmly for a moment about some of the things that have been happening.

I happen to be a member of the Subcommittee on Energy of the Committee on Government Reform, and we have had hearings with the American Petroleum Institute and others from the industry testifying before us. Also, Senator WYDEN in the Senate has taken testimony on this matter.

It is important for the American people to know that there is strong evidence that the industry acted to make sure that they reduced supply so that they could raise costs. Senator WYDEN had thick documents, which I have just put on record in our committee hearing, showing over the last decade of the nineties there was too much refinery backlog for the companies, so they acted, or at least indicated they were going to act, to make sure that those refineries shrunk. Over 50 of them have closed.

Therefore, we did not have the kind of supply that we needed; and of course, that drove up demand and drove up price. Now that that is up there, the companies will tell you the reason we do not have enough fuel at reasonable prices is because we do not have enough refineries.

Now they are looking for the triple play. Instead of producing more and getting that in the pipeline and having more refineries, they now want to do away with environmental regulations. This is not something we should allow to happen. We should keep our eye on that industry and make sure we get something done for the consumer.