

think he represented a forgotten segment of this great effort, this effort to bring the sunlight of freedom to Iraq.

He represented those people that don't wear the uniform in this operation but who wear contractor uniforms, who go out into very dangerous places in Iraq. And in this case, Steven Farley was with three colleagues, working the provincial reconstruction teams in Iraq. He was in Sadr City, that adjunct to Baghdad that has over 1 million people in an area of great fighting and great turmoil and great danger. And yet when he came home to see his loved ones, he told them he knew that he was in danger. He knew that it might, at some point, cost him his life, but he told them that he thought the cause was a worthwhile cause.

His service to America represented all those wonderful aspects of duty and honor and country and patriotism, even though he wasn't wearing the uniform of the Army or the Marine Corps or the Air Force or the Navy, because he was serving that same goal, that same ideal, that same flag, and all of us.

Mr. Speaker, he came home a few weeks before, bringing some of the members of the city council of Sadr City to the United States to let them see what freedom was like, what this great experiment in freedom called the United States of America was like, to inspire them, to give them a model they could go back and use in this fledgling representative government that is now taking place in Iraq.

He wanted to show them the American example, and Mr. Speaker, his example and the example of his family and the example of his great community, a guy from Guthrie, Oklahoma, it was the finest example that anybody can watch if they indeed want to model their country, their community, their town after a winning democracy, the United States of America.

So here was a gentleman who served in a very, very crucial area for the United States, and most of the work that we do here in the House of Representatives, most of our work is air-conditioned. I'm so proud of the members of the Armed Services Committee, most of whom have taken multiple trips to see the troops and the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. And we now and again go out and put our boots on the ground in some tough places, but most of the time, we're in Washington, D.C., or with our constituent cities and our wonderful communities. These Americans, Americans like Steven Farley, are out there for years on end in very difficult conditions, carrying the American flag.

So, Mr. Speaker, a number of us on the Armed Services Committee are going to be visiting Iraq and Afghanistan in the coming months, especially the summer months, when we take the

district work period break. I will tell you one thing I'm going to do. When I go to Baghdad this time, I'm going to spend more time with those contractors, people who haven't necessarily been given all of the credit that they should be given by this body, by the House of Representatives. People talk about the contractors as if they were somehow mercenaries.

Well, Steven Farley represented the very best of this very wonderful force of Americans who help to establish freedom around the world. May he rest in peace. God bless his family, and thank you, Steven Farley, for your service to the United States.

AMERICAN ENERGY SOLUTIONS FOR LOWER GAS PRICES

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

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, it's good to be here tonight, and I wanted to come and talk about something that's concerning Americans all over this country, and that's the price of gas and what we're doing about it here in this body, this decisive body that's supposed to be decisive, that takes action when we find our country in need.

I wanted to talk a little bit about something that happened to me shortly a couple of weeks ago I guess, and I started having people, Mr. Speaker, e-mail me and ask me questions about signing different types of petitions on the Internet, drill here, drill now, lower prices, several other ones on the Internet, so Americans could let their Members of Congress, Mr. Speaker, know how they felt about these skyrocketing gas prices that they had been promised by the new majority that they would get control of.

So I was in a service station down home, and there was another petition laying on the counter. I'm assuming that the proprietor of that service station put that down to give people something to do rather than beat him over the head, but it was a petition: Please sign here if you want to see Congress lower gas prices.

So I came up with an idea, Mr. Speaker. I said, you know, the American people are letting us know, as their representatives, how they feel. We need to let them know how we feel. And so I came up with this petition that's pretty simple. What it says is: American energy solutions for lower gas prices; bring onshore oil on-line; bring deepwater oil on-line; and bring new refineries on-line.

We have not produced in this country, Mr. Speaker, a refinery since the late 1970s. We now import about 7 billion gallons of gas a year. We also import about the same amount of diesel. So we don't even have the refining capacity to refine what we import.

So I did this, and I made a little petition. You can see it over here. It's got spots for 435 people plus the non-voting Delegates to sign. So far I'm pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, we've got 188 people who have signed this. We've got three Democrats, three brave Democrats that have signed it: NEIL ABERCROMBIE, PATRICK MURPHY, and Mr. Speaker, I believe HENRY CUELLAR was the last one from Texas. And so these are brave people that understand that we have got to do something.

The majority says, well, it will be 10 years before we ever get oil. We've got to start today. If President Clinton in 1995 had not vetoed the drilling in ANWR, we would be producing 1 million gallons of crude oil for this country every day.

So, Mr. Speaker, what this is about—and by the way, this is very simple, because what it says is, I will vote to increase U.S. oil production to lower the price of gas for Americans. And Mr. Speaker, if anybody wanted to know if their Member was on the petition, they could go to house.gov/westmoreland to see if their Member is on there. We've had two Members that did not sign originally, and Mr. Speaker, they were put on the would-not-sign list. They have heard from their constituents and have come back and are now signed onto the petition.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is very important for people to understand where their Members of Congress are at on the energy issue. You're going to hear all kinds of excuses. You're going to hear all kinds of different regulations they want to put in place, all kinds of different taxes they want to put in place. This petition is too simple for most Members of this body to understand because it only says, I will vote to increase oil production in the United States, our own natural resources, to lower gas prices for Americans. That's all it says.

And if somebody wanted to know, Mr. Speaker, they could go to house.gov/westmoreland, and see exactly where their Member of Congress was at because, listen, Mr. Speaker, we hear about change from just about every candidate running, but we are going to have to be forced to change by our constituents. Because as you've seen since the new majority came in in January of 2007, there's been nothing done.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would ask the American people if I could to help us bring about change by notifying your Congressman and say get out of the fetal position and let's be called to action.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. MAHONEY of Florida (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today.