

The Republican record on energy programs which have helped Americans is poor indeed. Let's look at the facts and decide if we need another Republican energy plan.

According to the Energy Information Administration, the price of gas is now \$3.65, up from \$1.46 when President Bush took office. A 150 percent increase. The price of gas was \$2.29 when Republicans adopted their energy plan. Today, it's a 59 percent increase. \$3.65.

Republican energy policies have resulted in record profits for oil companies. The five largest companies have posted profits of \$556 billion from 2001 to 2007, including \$123 billion in 2007 alone. Yet, Republicans have voted against nearly every energy initiative brought to the House floor.

Madam Speaker, I submit to you we must do everything we can, and examine every option in our efforts to help American citizens and to change our energy culture. Yes, we must look at drilling, but we need to be responsible in our approach and ensure that we are making decisions that actually achieve our goals, and our goals must be to help the taxpayers, not the oil corporations.

We must look at alternative forms of energy, we must look at renewable energy, we must look at every aspect of energy consumption before we act. There are real differences here, and I hope Congress will do the heavy lifting and make the difficult choices necessary to do what is right for the American people.

It's long past the time for rhetoric. It's time to tackle this real challenge and come up with real solutions, not short-term fixes, which will lead the American public, once again, footing the bill for Big Oil.

Madam Speaker, today the New York Times had another editorial. The New York Times' independent observations:

"Voters are furious at high gas prices. Republicans are happily pandering at their anger. Congress has sensibly renewed the moratorium each year for the last 26. Unfortunately, these are not sensible times, which means that congressional Democrats, particularly House Speaker NANCY PELOSI, must try hard to make the best of a bad situation. The situation, briefly, is this: The Republicans have been bludgeoning the Democrats with the claim that Democrat opposition to offshore drilling is to blame for high fuel prices and that drilling is the answer, or one answer, to the country's dependence on foreign oil. We find it hard to imagine that they really believe what they say. Drilling will have no impact on fuel prices for at least 15 years, if then, and any number of efficiency measures will do more to reduce the country's dependence than drilling for America's modest offshore reserves. But the chant of drill, baby, drill, is playing far too well. Ms. PELOSI's compromise deserves support."

#### STAND UP AND BE COUNTED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURGESS. Before I came to the United States Congress, in another life, I was a physician, and oftentimes when I was introduced to speak at an engagement back home, the person doing the introductions will say, Do you want to be referred to as Doctor or Congressman? I usually start off with perhaps a little lighthearted humor in that, Well, physicians still enjoy about a 70 to 80 percent approval rating with the American public, and Members of Congress enjoy about a 7 to 8 percent approval rating with the country. So, mother always called me Doctor, and that is what I'd prefer to be called. But it's really a sad commentary on the institution that our credibility is at such a low ebb.

Now we just had the gentleman from Tennessee talk about an editorial in the New York Times. Since he brought it up, let me refer attention to the New York Times from yesterday. Reading it on the airplane up here, they referenced the fact that we have a serious problem with the chairman of our Ways and Means Committee and the credibility has been lost for the individual who is head of the largest tax-writing body in the House of Representatives.

The Tax Code in this country is complex. No one understands it. People understand how mistakes can be made. But the chairman of that body, at the very least, ought to hold himself above reproach. And yes, maybe one transgression, perhaps two, but transgression after transgression after transgression is more than the American people can tolerate.

We are going to debate an energy bill today. But the fact is we are not really going to accomplish anything on energy. Yes, I know they have the votes. They can pass pretty much whatever they want. They can ram it to the floor, like they did last night, 15 minutes before it goes to the Rules Committee, and then here on the floor, as if by magic, today. But this bill is dead on arrival in the Senate. It is going to do nothing to help the American people.

Here's the tragedy. Out in the countryside, no one believes that we have the ability to do much of anything. We couldn't talk about border security or immigration reform because we have no credibility. We can't talk about what we are going to do with the economy because we have no credibility.

The credibility of this institution was badly damaged prior to the 2006 election, and I grant you it was an election strategy by the other side that worked. Paint the working majority at that time as one that wasn't working, and we will get to take credit for it and we will get to take power.

So look at where we are today, 22½ months later. Are we out of Iraq? I don't think so. Are gas prices lower? I don't think so. All of those things were promised during the run-up to the last election. And, yes, they promised to be the most ethical and competent Congress that the country had seen in quite some time.

Now I call on the 30 new Members on the majority side who were elected on this platform to stand up. Stand up in your conference and be counted. Now is the time. We have a serious crisis of credibility on one of the major committees in the United States Congress, and we can't get past that point. One individual holds in his hand the power to begin to restore some of the credibility to the institution that we so sorely need.

I call on the freshmen Democrats to ask the chairman to step aside, whether temporarily or permanently, but step aside until he solves his own problems so that the institution is not left carrying that weight. I think the institution of the House of Representatives deserves no less than that courtesy at a time when our economy is suffering, our energy prices are high, and certainly the ability of the country to defend the border has been seriously questioned. This is the time.

This is the time that the House needs to have maximum credibility to get these issues accomplished and, at the same time, here we are talking about the same things and over and over again.

Again, I call on the freshmen Members, stand up to your Speaker, stand up to the powerful committee chairmen. Let's move past this point. You have other capable members on the majority side on the Committee on Ways and Means who can serve, either temporarily or permanently, to serve that body, and let's move past this point.

It's time. The American people are waiting on us to do the big work, and we can't do it because we are bound up in these seemingly endless quandaries that we find ourselves in. Let's show the American people that we can lead. Maybe then they will restore some of the credibility to us.

#### THE COST OF ENERGY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. WAMP) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WAMP. Madam Speaker, over the last 14 years that I have had the privilege to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives, I have tried not to be excessively partisan. Frankly, having grown up a Democrat and become a Republican during the Reagan movement in this country, I feel like neither party has an exclusive on integrity, neither party has an exclusive on ideas.

But I feel compelled, Madam Speaker, to come to the floor today to say