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Week Ending Friday, August 29, 2008

The President's Radio Address

August 23, 2008

Good morning. Before they left Washington for their August recess, Congress failed to take action on an issue that is currently of great concern to Americans: high prices at the gas pump.

The fundamental reason for high gasoline prices is that the supply of oil is not keeping pace with demand. To reduce pressure on prices, we need to increase the supply of oil, especially oil produced here at home. So in June, I called on Congress to open up more of America's domestic oil resources for exploration, including offshore exploration of the Outer Continental Shelf. The American people overwhelmingly support this proposal. But throughout the summer, the leaders of the Democratic Congress have refused to allow it to come to a vote.

Now that the pressure to take action has become overwhelming, Democratic leaders in Congress have changed their strategy. Rather than attempting to block expanded drilling by preventing a vote, they are now attempting to block it by bringing up a bill that is designed to fail.

News reports indicate that Democratic leaders in Congress may plan to hold a vote on a bill that would make us more dependent on foreign oil and would likely make energy costs go up, not down. This bill would raise taxes on energy companies, which would reduce domestic production. This bill would make the Nation more vulnerable to supply shocks by tapping into our emergency supply of oil, the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. And it would impose a rigid national mandate that would increase electricity costs in States where there are few renewable resources.

Democratic leaders know that these counterproductive proposals will not become law. Yet they seem ready to push this legislation as a way to block offshore drilling while appearing to be in favor of it. They need to stop standing in the way of expanding domestic production and take meaningful steps now to address the pain caused by high energy prices.

I've proposed a comprehensive approach to our energy problems that would permit a range of new drilling options and encourage the development of alternative resources. If Democratic leaders will not approve this comprehensive approach, the very least they should do when they return in September is to take action on three commonsense energy solutions that enjoy bipartisan support.

First, Congress should open the way for environmentally responsible offshore exploration on the Outer Continental Shelf. Experts believe that these areas could eventually produce nearly 10 years worth of America's current annual oil production. This exploration is now banned by a provision included in the annual interior appropriations bill. When Congress returns, they should remove this restriction so we can get these vast oil resources from the ocean floor to your gas tank.

Second, Congress should expand access to oil shale, a resource right here in America that could produce the equivalent of more than a century's worth of imports at current levels. Last year, however, Democratic leaders pushed through legislation blocking oil shale leasing on Federal lands. They should lift that ban as soon as they return.

Third, Congress should extend renewable power tax credits to spur the development of alternative sources of energy like wind and solar. They should make these credits long-term and expand them to cover all forms of low-emission power generation, including nuclear power. Increasing production of low-carbon electricity will help us reduce our addiction to oil by allowing us to power a new generation of plug-in hybrid and hydrogen-powered vehicles.

There is bipartisan support in Congress for all three of these measures. So, instead of

spending the next month deadlocked on matters where Republicans and Democrats disagree, Members of Congress should come together to pass legislation in these areas, where there is agreement.

This Congress has been one of the most unproductive on record. They've failed to address the challenge of high gas prices. Members still have time to take action on this vital priority for the American people. They need to send me a bill next month that I can sign, so we can bring relief to drivers, small-business owners, farmers and ranchers, and every American affected by high prices at the pump.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7 a.m. on August 22 at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on August 23. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 22 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Proclamation 8278—Women's Equality Day, 2008

August 22, 2008

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

With vision and determination, American women have helped build our great Nation. On Women's Equality Day, we remember the dedication of women who overcame many obstacles in order to secure the right to vote.

The struggle for women's rights is a story of strong women willing to take the lead and pave the way toward equal voting rights for all American citizens. In 1848, a group of determined women came together in Seneca Falls, New York, to proclaim that "all men and women are created equal," and demand suffrage. On August 26, 1920, their voices were finally heard, and the 19th Amendment to the Constitution guaranteed women the right to vote.

As we look back on the journey to women gaining suffrage, we remember the sacrifices of people like Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. More than 160 years after the Seneca Falls Convention, we celebrate the spirit, leadership, and hard work of those pioneering women. We also recognize the women who continue in this tradition by acting as role models in their communities, helping raise the next generation of Americans, leading in their professions, and serving in the Armed Forces protecting our country. These women are continuing on the path set by those who came before them, so that all Americans can realize the great promise of our Nation.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim August 26, 2008, as Women's Equality Day. I call upon the people of the United States to celebrate the achievements of women and observe this day with appropriate programs and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-second day of August, in the year of our Lord two thousand eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-third.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 9:33 a.m., August 26, 2008]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 25, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on August 27.

Statement on the Situation in Georgia

August 25, 2008

I am deeply concerned by today's appeal to President Medvedev by Russia's Federation Council and Duma, the upper and lower Houses of Russia's Parliament, to recognize the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent countries. I call on Russia's leadership to meet its commitments and not recognize these separatist regions.

Georgia's territorial integrity and borders must command the same respect as every