

House Democrats are fighting to improve the lives of soldiers when they return home.

Last month we passed a new and improved GI Bill that restores the promise of a full 4-year college scholarship. The original GI Bill sparked economic growth and expansion in America after World War II. This new bill will be an integral part of rebuilding our failing economy. It will also make military service more attractive and improve the quality of recruits as we work to strengthen our military. The new GI Bill goes further than current law, which only covers a small portion of public and private college education.

Madam Speaker, the education of our Nation's veterans should be considered a cost of the war which they rightfully have earned after completing their military service.

Madam Speaker, the U.S. has never gone wrong when it properly invests in education and rewards our veterans. I would only hope that President Bush would reconsider his opposition to the new GI Bill. It is the right thing to do for both our military and our economy.

DEMOCRATIC MAJORITY NEEDS NEW ENERGY POLICY NOW

(Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, with high gas prices soaring, moms and dads across East Tennessee and across America are struggling to put a budget together at the kitchen table. They are worried how they are going to pay for their health care, how they are going to buy enough gas to get their kids to school, how they are going to pay for their children's education.

Families and small businesses across America are hurting. Earl Humphreys, for example, in Bristol, Tennessee, owns Lawn Boyz Lawn Care Service. He has told me he may have to go out of business.

It is time for solutions, time for no more excuses. High gas prices are not only an economic security issue, they are a national security issue. We are too dependent on foreign countries, countries that hate us and hate our freedoms and, quite frankly, hate our religion.

We need an energy policy now. I call on the Democrat majority to offer legislation that will provide for lower gas prices, better economic security, better national security, and I ask them to do it now. We need to use American energy. We need solutions.

REPUBLICAN LEADERS OPPOSE EFFORTS TO LOWER RECORD HIGH GAS PRICES AT THE PUMP

(Ms. WATSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. WATSON. Madam Speaker, for 7 years now, Washington Republicans

have allowed Big Oil to run our Nation's energy policy. From the very first days of this administration, Vice President CHENEY was meeting in secret with energy executives to develop its energy proposal. Today we see the results of that secret policy that was approved by a rubber-stamp Republican Congress. When President Bush took office, the average price of gas was \$1.47. Today, it has more than doubled to an average hovering around \$4.

Since taking control of Congress last year, Democrats have rejected the failed Republican policies that are responsible for these record high prices. We are working to lower prices by cracking down on price gouging, holding OPEC accountable for price fixing, repealing subsidies for profit-rich oil companies, and instead investing in renewable energy.

Each of these efforts have received some partisan support, but the Republican leadership of this House and the President continue to oppose our efforts.

RESPONSIBLE ENERGY POLICY NEEDED

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

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Madam Speaker, today America is drilling for ice on Mars, yet we cannot drill for oil in America. We have billions of gallons of crude oil in America that we can't even tap into because of a failed policy by the majority. We can't drill for oil. Just yesterday, I filled up my car and paid \$3.99.9 a gallon.

It is crazy that we can't drill for oil. We have to have responsible energy policy that gives us more supply. It is not about wind or electricity or taxing oil. The Democrats want to put a 50 cents a gallon tax on every gallon of diesel and gasoline in America. That is insane. That is not energy policy.

We have to drill for oil now. We have to streamline the permitting process for refineries. We have to supply more gas to people. It is a national security policy, it is an economic policy that we cannot continue that the majority has given us today. We need a responsible energy policy.

DEMOCRATS TAKE ACTION ON RECORD HIGH GAS PRICES AT THE PUMP

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Speaker, as the price of gas continues to hit record highs almost every day, House Democrats continue to work on passing legislation that creates a cleaner and smarter energy policy that will provide consumers some real relief.

This year, the House has passed nine bills, many of which the President has

vetoed, that should help lower prices at the pump.

Last month we passed a final farm bill that makes an historic investment in expanding biofuel production, largely from non-food crops such as cornstalks, wood chips and switchgrass. The bill also provides support to farmers growing energy crops and entrepreneurs building refineries to convert biomass into fuel. Without biofuels, gasoline prices would be about 50 cents higher per gallon than they are right now.

The farm bill should be going to the President's desk any day now, but he plans to veto it. Fortunately, we should have enough bipartisan support to override that veto when the bill comes back to Congress.

Madam Speaker, investing in biofuels is critical to our energy future. The farm bill is just one more example of how this Democratic Congress is working to lower prices at the pump.

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INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF OIL AT HOME

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

Mr. PITTS. Madam Speaker, President Bush recently went to Saudi Arabia to ask the gulf kingdom to increase its oil production to help bring down gas prices. Instead of flying all the way to the Middle East, perhaps he should have made the short trip down Pennsylvania Avenue for a visit with Congress to ask the lawmakers here to increase the supply of oil right here at home.

According to the Department of Interior, 86 billion barrels of oil are available in the Outer Continental Shelf, added to the 53 billion barrels available in land. According to the Bureau of Land Management, we have 139 billion barrels of oil right here at home. That's more than the oil-rich countries like Kuwait, Venezuela and Russia have. Last year we imported over 6 billion gallons of refined gasoline into the United States.

One might ask, considering these numbers, why aren't we attempting to access more of our fuel right here at home? The Democrat leaders have a roadblock to every bill to drill for oil, natural gas, shale oil, right here in the U.S.

How long is it going to take them to learn?

AMERICAN FAMILIES ARE PAYING THE PRICE

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

Mr. ARCURI. Madam Speaker, today American families are paying the price for 7 years of failed economic policies

by this administration. This year alone, our economy has lost more than 300,000 jobs. It's important to remember that in order to just keep up with the population growth, our economy must create at least 150,000 jobs per month.

These statistics are devastating to millions of unemployed Americans who are increasingly competing against each other for the very few jobs that have become available. Yet President Bush continues to sit on the sidelines hoping that the economic situation will correct itself without additional governmental intervention.

The Democratic House believes the government must act, and it must act now. That's why we passed legislation last month that would extend unemployment insurance to workers who have exhausted their benefits. We also plan to move a second economic stimulus package that should help create jobs. I hope both President Bush and congressional Republicans would finally realize that this is the right thing to do.

DEMOCRATS HELP REBUILD THE ECONOMY

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

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Speaker, with so many Americans fearing the loss of their jobs and their homes and worrying about the rising cost of basic needs like food and gas, it is clear that Washington must act.

The House had led the way in working to jump-start the economic recovery by putting hundreds of dollars in the hands of more than 130 million American families with the economic stimulus package. That is only the first step. It is going to take time to reverse the 7 years of the Bush failed economic policies that have favored the wealthiest few to the detriment of the middle class.

Congressional Democrats are working to address the record high cost of gasoline with the passage of a renewable energy tax incentive that will lower prices at the pump and create thousands of green jobs. With 325,000 jobs lost over the last 5 months, this Congress extended unemployment benefits last month, so that those having a hard time finding a new job have access to 13 additional weeks.

The Bush economy is hurting middle-class families in my home State of New Jersey, across the Nation, and we must give them relief.

DELIVER FUEL SOURCES TO THE PEOPLE

(Mr. BISHOP of Utah asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Madam Speaker, gas prices have finally hit \$4 a gallon. That's \$1.71 higher than when we

first met as a Congress, and the Speaker said she had a secret plan to lower those costs.

Yet rather than talking about energy issues, we are talking, spending time to find scapegoats to blame for those costs, not realizing that for every dollar that goes up in energy costs, jobs are lost, income is reduced, our social programs are harmed and people simply suffer. We should be fighting for these issues, for the 1,100 people that worked for American Airlines but were fired because they couldn't afford the gas for 100 planes; for the Washington, D.C., cabbie who, for the first time in his life, cannot greet his kids at home when they come home from school because he has to work 2 hours a day longer for the same amount of money; for the Virginia father who can no longer attend his father-and-son outing because he can't afford the gas to go there.

People are suffering, and, instead, we are here on the floor dealing with congressional minutia. We must be dealing with legislation to improve conservation, improve production and improve innovations of how we deliver those fuel sources to the people. Otherwise we will become, as John Adams said, one useless man is disgraced, two are a law firm, and three or more become a Congress.

The people have had this Congress.

DEMOCRATS TAKE ACTION ON RECORD HIGH GAS PRICES AT THE PUMP

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

Mr. WU. Madam Speaker, I, for one, welcome this opportunity to engage in a debate with my friends across the aisle about who truly stands with the American consumer versus standing with Big Oil.

Over the weekend, the average price for a gallon of gas hit \$4 per gallon. It's \$4.50 per gallon at the pump closest to this debate. These outrageous prices are taking their toll on all of us, and the average American driver now pays more than \$2,200 per year for gasoline, up from about \$1,400 a year in 2001 at the beginning of the Bush administration.

Since January 2007, when this Democratic Congress came into the majority, we have been committed to changing the Nation's energy policy so we can lower prices at the pump. Last year, this Democratic Congress passed the landmark law that will make cars and trucks more efficient, which will eventually save American families somewhere between \$700 to \$1,000 each year. We have followed this up this year by passing bills cracking down on price gouging by Big Oil.

NATURAL GAS IS THE CLEAN, GREEN FUEL

(Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, today natural gas opened at \$12.65 per 1,000 Btus. That is an almost 100 percent increase from this time a year ago.

Natural gas is the clean, green fuel that powers our manufacturing economy, accounts for 23 percent of the energy consumed in America and heats 52 million of our homes. Yet as prices continue to skyrocket and companies move offshore because America has the highest natural gas prices in the world, this Congress has done absolutely nothing to increase production.

Tomorrow, I will offer an amendment to the Interior appropriations bill that will lift the congressional moratorium on offshore production from 50 to 200 miles, which happens to be the safest and most environmentally friendly place to produce energy. There is no need to beg the Saudis for more oil and Canada for more natural gas.

We have vast reserves here in America. We need to produce American energy with an American labor force and give Americans energy they can afford.

COLLUSION AND PRICE GOUGING

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Madam Speaker, you have got to admit it's a great system. The oil companies fill the Republican coffers with campaign contributions, and the Republicans pretend that they care about consumers while the Republicans stonewall steps to rein in price-gouging market speculation.

Remember the Enron loophole? That's 50 cents a gallon at the pump today. Ken Lay is dead, but it lives on.

They are protecting OPEC against World Trade Organization complaints that the President refuses to sign. He goes over and holds hands with the Saudi princes, but he won't file a complaint against market collusion.

Refineries, you are right. We have got a shortage. ExxonMobil says they are doing just fine. They have no plans to build a refinery. They are making obscene profits, 6,492 leases, no development. Eighty percent of the Outer Continental Shelf reserves are available, no plans to drill. Naval Petroleum Reserve, it is 8 years since Clinton leased it, zero percent production. There is a sea of oil under it.

Market forces, 11 bucks in 1 day for a barrel of oil, while consumption is way down in the U.S. It's not market forces, it's collusion and price gouging. The Bush-Cheney Republican caucus and the OPEC cartel are doing just fine the way things are. They pretend they want change, but they don't.