

Mr. CAMPBELL of California. I thank my friend, Mr. Westmoreland from Georgia, and you are equally a friend of the taxpayer and a Georgia bulldog in terms of fighting for taxpayers and consumers and for Americans to be more free rather than less free in the future. Thank you for yielding. I stand h...

Mr. CAMPBELL of California. I thank my friend, Mr. Westmoreland from Georgia, and you are equally a friend of the taxpayer and a Georgia bulldog in terms of fighting for taxpayers and consumers and for Americans to be more free rather than less free in the future. Thank you for yielding.

I stand here in front of this chart which says that gasoline is \$4.09, which is the national average. As my friend indicated, I'm from California. I can tell you that this last weekend when I was home I paid \$4.91 for premium unleaded.

In California, where we have even more restrictions on refineries and fuel and gasoline than you do nationally, our price is even higher than it is nationally, so we're headed for \$5-a-gallon gasoline in California.

The one thing that's not very well known is it's not going to stop there. Natural gas price has gone up as well. The price of natural gas is now about 50 percent higher than it was just about 6 months ago. Now, in my home State of California, about 95 percent of our heating comes from natural gas and about 50 percent of our electricity comes from natural gas. So my constituents are already being shocked at the gas pump; but come this summer, they're about to be shocked with their electric bill. And come this winter, they will be shocked with their natural gas heating bill.

All these energy prices are going up. They're impacting consumers, and they're impacting businesses. I can't tell you how many business owners I have talked to that are being squeezed by the price of fuel in the costs of their products, whether it's a pizza place that delivers, or whether it is a delivery place that has delivery trucks. It doesn't matter what it is, whatever you get, it got to you because somebody brought it. And when somebody brought it, they used some kind of fuel to do that, and the price of that fuel is up. And those businesses can't pass that price on right now because the economy is so weak. And so if they pass that cost on, consumers won't pay it and their volume will go down and down, so businesses are being squeezed.

I talked to an owner of a company the other day who has a lot of his employees--we have long commutes, often, in California--and the price of their commute has gotten so high that he's probably going to see if--which, again, is often restricted by State law--the company can go to a 4-day work week or maybe even a 3-day work week in order to reduce the huge costs that his employees have commuting 50, 60, 70 miles to and from work every day. So this is impacting everybody. It's the biggest issue I hear about when I go home.

And so what are we doing? What is this Democratic-led Congress leading us to do? I mean, it's affecting homes, it's affecting businesses, jobs, employment, the economy, everything. And what are we doing here? Nothing. This Democratic-led Congress is doing absolutely nothing on the biggest issue that is facing America today.

A week or so ago we did pass a resolution, though, commemorating the end of the Revolutionary War 225 years ago. Now, that's great. I mean, I'm glad we had an American Revolution, I'm glad we won, I'm glad it ended. But I think we could be doing a little more productive things on the floor of this House with energy and with energy prices.

Now, the Democrats on the other side, they will have you saying, oh, well, we can't do this and we can't do that and we can't do the other. Let me tell you what I think and what we Republicans think we should do: Everything. There shouldn't be anything off the table, basically, in this discussion because of the crisis we're in and because of the magnitude of this situation.

Let me try and break it down into three areas of things that we ought to be doing. And the first is more production and supply and delivery of oil and natural gas. Now, you will hear Democrats say, oh, I heard Senator Obama the other day say, oh, that won't affect the price for 5 years; you won't get any of that oil out for 5 years. True, you won't get any of that oil out for 5 years, but markets are anticipatory. Part of the reason that gas prices are so high today is because of the markets anticipating increasing demand in India, in China, and in Brazil that will eat up more supply. If we send a strong message from this House of Representatives that we are going to do everything we can to produce more oil and gas from everywhere we can produce, the markets will react to that. Does that mean it will go back to where it was? No. And that's not the only thing we should do. But it is something we should do, and it should be one of the clubs we

have in our bag that we use to bring these numbers down.

Second, we should be trying to develop all alternative forms of energy that are out there in order to reduce the demand on the fossil fuels. Now, the first thing we should be looking at is nuclear. Now, you look at France, Japan and Sweden. Sweden, arguably the most environmentally conscious country on Earth, and they get over 80 percent of their power from nuclear. What shocks me, Mr. Westmoreland, is that I hear the Democrats say all the time, well, we want to do more nuclear power if it is safe. You always hear the qualification, "if it is safe." Oh, my gosh; you've got three big countries out there have 80 percent. You can go to Italy and a whole bunch of other countries where they're producing a significant amount of their energy from nuclear and no one has had problems.

To say "it is safe," and everyone looks back at Three Mile Island, but that was 40 years ago almost, that would be like looking at a 40-year-old Altair computer and trying to assess whether you could run things with that computer today.

Nuclear technology has progressed every bit as much. And the nuclear technology that exists today is much more efficient and much safer than anything we had a long time ago. And we should be putting up nuclear plants as quick as we can and replacing those natural gas plants, replacing some of those others.

Liquefying coal is another thing we should be doing. We are the Saudi Arabia of coal. We have more coal in the United States than any other country on Earth. And second, by the way, is China. And what are the Chinese doing? Developing their coal and using their coal as quickly as they can. And what are we doing? Nothing. And then we should be looking at other alternative fuels like methanol, ethanol, butanol, all these different possible fuels.

But let's talk about ethanol for a second. You've heard a lot about it. We hear a lot about the subsidies and making it from corn, but the best thing to make ethanol from is sugar. But in this country, we have a huge tariff, I believe it's 75 percent--I could be wrong on that, but I believe it's 75 percent on imported ethanol and imported sugar.

Fifty-four cents a gallon. Fifty-four cents a gallon--thank you, Mr. Westmoreland--tax on imported ethanol or imported sugar cane to make ethanol. Why? If we think this might be one of our future alternative fuels, why would we tax it more than we tax anything else? It makes no sense. So we should be developing all of those alternative fuels.

Wind and solar, them, too, although they will never be more than 1 or 2 or 3 percent, but we should be developing them as well, and hydrothermal.

And then the third leg of this stool is efficiency. Yes, we need to have more efficient cars. Yes, we need to have more efficient homes. Yes, we should have more efficient production capacities in business. And yes, we should do all that, too. But we can't do it only on efficiency, we can't do it only on oil production, we can't do it only on alternatives, we need to do all three.

And what so disappoints me about the majority Democrats in this House is some of them want to do one of those, occasionally they want to do two, nobody wants to do all three on the Democratic side. But that's what we need to do.

This is a crisis; it's not going to go away soon. And the American people have the right to have us in this House react and give them the tools they need to get the price of energy down to help them lift this economy.

I thank you for the time, Mr. Westmoreland. I yield back to my friend from Georgia.