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Speaker Pelosi, Tear Down This Wall!

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For weeks (since the House abruptly adjourned for the summer), Republicans have been in Washington demanding Speaker Pelosi to allow an up or down vote to free America's own energy from the Democrats' embargo and ease the pain that Americans currently face at the pump.

Rather than offer solutions, Speaker Pelosi continues to insult the intelligence of hardworking Americans struggling to pay historically high energy prices. Members of Congress ought to do the jobs they were sent to do and remain in Washington until a solution to the country's energy crisis is passed. Instead, Speaker Pelosi adjourned the House of Representatives for five weeks. Though she might have made environmentalists proud by turning off the floor lights, CSPAN cameras, and microphones behind her, they could not have been thrilled to watch her hop into her gas tax-exempt government SUV (no doubt with its tires correctly inflated) and her Air Force jet to go on a five-week, nationwide book tour. Her actions seem a little too far removed from the pain that hardworking Americans are feeling from high energy costs for comfort.

Perhaps Speaker Pelosi didn't realize that House Republicans hear the American people loud and clear, and she certainly didn't expect us to make clear that we have had enough of the Democrats' embargo against the production of American-owned domestic energy. Over a hundred of Republican members have already opted to protest the Speaker's vacation and have returned to Washington to demand that she call an emergency special session of Congress to vote on our "all of the above" American Energy Act. Surely \$4 per gallon gasoline is more important to the American people than promoting a book. Since the protest began, thousands of Americans visiting Washington have come to the House floor to listen to common-sense Republican solutions that would increase American made energy.

Finally, last weekend, Speaker Pelosi broke her silence: her response was to ignore the pleas of the American people by offering more of the same failed policies that do nothing to increase production of American energy. Instead, both the Speaker and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid remain worshippers of a radical environmental ideology and seem to be incapable of relating to the pain felt by working people.

Along with Senator Barack Obama, they propose a windfall profits tax on oil sold at or above \$80 per barrel. It boggles my mind why, during an energy crisis, they would revert back to the failed policies of the Carter Administration that brought us two-hour waiting lines to fill our cars with gas to get to work. In fact, the Congressional Research Service found that domestic production of energy actually decreased because of the lame-brained tax.

The solution is quite simple: If we want gas prices to go down, then more oil needs to enter the market. If we want to lessen our dependency on foreign oil, then a windfall profits tax is the last thing America needs. Guess what? The American people know this.

Recent polling reveals that more than 70 percent of Americans favor increasing energy exploration and production at home. The good news is that for the foreseeable future, we have plenty of energy to produce in America.

Unfortunately -- thanks to the Democrats and radical environmentalists -- it is illegal to produce it. Congress has taken 75 percent of our onshore energy resources off the table, making them off limits to energy exploration and production. To put it simply, the only thing preventing them from getting it are Speaker Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Reid. In the House, the Speaker continues to block Members of both parties from voting on the comprehensive American Energy Act, which would increase the supply of American-made energy, improve energy conservation and efficiency, and promote renewable and alternative energy technologies. Would parents tolerate being told that we had enough classrooms for our kids, but we can't use 75 percent of them? Surely not, nor will they tolerate being told so on producing American energy.

Why? The Speaker seems content to push a radical agenda that would increase regulation instead of exploration and taxation instead of production. She's even told

vulnerable members of her own party to express their independence from her radical ideas if it helps them get elected. Shame on them for not demanding a vote for their constituents, and shame on her for continuing to deny them what is right.

For months, Republicans have made clear that we need conservation, but not just conservation. We need renewable energy, but not just renewable. We need alternatives, but not just alternatives. We need to produce energy in America for Americans to drive down the cost of gas and increase our energy independence. Congress has both a duty and a historic opportunity to help free generations of Americans from the grip of foreign oil. Despite this, Democrat leaders have their heads in the sand avoiding options to increase American-made energy supplies. Conversely, Republicans have their hands in the sand looking for energy sources.

I haven't found many people saying that they are paying too little at the pump, and people want Congress to be pro-active for once. So I hope that Blue Dog Democrats -- for that matter, any Democrats -- who understand this will work with us simply to allow a vote. Once we can have a vote on a real energy plan, we'll get real American energy.

Republicans will continue to fight for a comprehensive, common sense energy plan that includes *all* of those goals. People across the country are begging Congress to act, and the time has come for the Speaker, the Senate Majority Leader and Democrats across Capitol Hill to either work with us to develop more American energy or get out of the way and stop blocking us from providing the help sought by the American people.

I'm sure that the Speaker will continue her book tour straight into the Democrat convention in Denver. So it's hard to take her comments on energy seriously as she jet-sets around. She has every right to vote against the comprehensive American Energy Act offered by House Republicans -- should she ever allow the House to vote on it. She does not, however, have the right to prevent a comprehensive, common-sense policy that nearly three-fourths of Americans demand.

If Speaker Pelosi were at all serious about helping the working people across our country, she'd cut her book tour short, stop flying across the country on her taxpayer funded jet, and get back to work with Republicans to alleviate the pain that

Americans currently face at the pump.

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