

## **RSC Member Op/Eds and Media Events:**

**Congresswoman Mary Fallin** wrote an op/ed entitled "ANWR's Place in Our Future," for Townhall.com. "Opponents of drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge suggest that developing new oilfields there would damage wildlife and the environment. Sadly, few of those opponents have ever seen ANWR in person, and even fewer have seen the remote, empty coastal plain where drilling would actually occur. It takes an eyes-open trip to this region to clearly see why those opponents are wrong, and why we can no longer afford to block ANWR drilling as gasoline touches five dollars per gallon. This weekend, myself and 10 other colleagues had the privilege of embarking on such a trip. Flying over ANWR's coastal plain, I could only think of one word to describe it: barren. On the particularly small section where abundant oil rests, there are no mountains and no trees, just a flat frozen tundra. ... Under this barren land lies ten billion barrels of recoverable oil. Eighty miles to the west is the famed Prudhoe Bay oilfield, which at one point was supplying some 25% of all our domestic oil production. The ANWR coastal plain holds a similar potential if we have the will to explore and develop it. If we don't, we will continue to rely on foreign oil for far too large a share of our ever-growing energy needs. ... Our Congressional delegation also visited the National Renewable Energy Laboratory operated by the Department of Energy in Denver. Scientists and engineers there are doing vital research into solar and wind power, hydrogen fuel cells, hybrid vehicles and much more. We support those efforts, along with every reasonable conservation measure to reduce energy use. But the stark fact about America's energy picture in mid-2008 is that we are years away from replacing our large dependence on fossil fuels like oil and gas. If you doubt that, go out into the parking lot and count the wind and solar powered cars," wrote Fallin.

**Congressman Joe Pitts** wrote an about high gas prices for the Phoenixville News in Pennsylvania. "The American people are being pinched by high gas prices. In all of my communications with constituents, I hear about how high gas prices are forcing families to make difficult budgetary decisions. The high cost of fuel is increasing prices for other goods as well, from a gallon of milk to a loaf of bread. Congress needs to act. And we have many good ideas to address the issue. ... The truth is, the House Democratic Leadership controls the floor agenda and Speaker Pelosi has made well known she simply does not believe we should increase oil and natural gas production here in America. She will not allow the House to vote on this issue despite the fact that her party has the majority. House Republicans have been forced to use procedural moves in an effort to get votes on legislation that we know is so critical to American families. It does not need to come to this. I am confident that bipartisan compromise can take place to move this issue forward, but we cannot make that happen until Speaker Pelosi removes the stranglehold she has on the House floor schedule. America needs energy now. We cannot simply hope new sources of energy will appear. The roadblocks to development of our own resources should be removed. We need to act in environmentally friendly ways using both traditional sources of energy and new, clean, renewable technologies. This issue is too important to fall victim to partisan bickering or election year politics. The American people deserve a Congress that is responsive to the issue they care about most. I stand ready to work with my colleagues in either party to accomplish this goal, if Speaker Pelosi should deem it acceptable," wrote Pitts.

### **Communicator of the Week Congressman Phil Gingrey (R-GA) during the RSC Special Order**

**"Here is the question: Do you think Congress should adjourn for a 5-week recess even if no vote is taken to allow offshore drilling on our Outer Continental Shelf for oil and natural gas? ... With several hundred responses already in, the results are overwhelming – 94% do not support Congress adjourning for recess without legislation that would allow increased drilling. 94%.**

**Now, as I say, I won my last election with 71 percent. This tells you that a lot of good, red-blooded, conservative, hardworking Democrats in my district feel the exact same way we do tonight. And I know that there are a lot of my colleagues on this floor, who, given the opportunity to have a bill to vote to increase our domestic source and end our dependency on these foreign countries that hate us, would gladly vote. And maybe they will stay here with us come Thursday or come Friday, a sit-in, and say, "We are not going home until we have a bill to vote on."**

**Congressman Eric Cantor** posted on Powerline Blog about Democrats' failure to help solve America's energy problems. *"Congressional Democrats expecting to cruise to a landslide in November are getting a reality check. Their persistent refusal to expand production of American energy has come back to bite us all in the form of \$4-plus gasoline. Well documented is the \$700 billion we give in petrodollars each year to other nations, many of whom promote terrorism and anti-Americanism. While American families are enraged over pain at the pumps, Democrat leaders, beholden to environmental extremists, remain mired in an anti-drilling posture that pits them against a clear majority of the American people. Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid have ducked and dodged a debate over drilling at every turn. Reid has bogged down bills by stonewalling Republican amendments aimed to bolster American energy exploration. So what is their strategy then? The Democrats' goal is to pull the wool over the eyes of the American people. Look like you are doing something substantial, rail against "Big Oil" and other convenient scapegoats you can find, and pray the public doesn't catch on. Republicans stand ready to lock arms with our Democrat counterparts to promote conservation and to heavily invest in alternative sources of energy. But for us to pretend that oil won't remain a significant part of our energy consumption for the next several years is a dereliction of duty. This ostrich head-in-the-sand strategy only promises greater pain down the road. Congressional Democrats thought this summer and fall would be a cakewalk for them. They expected it to be a coronation of Senator Obama. What they got instead was a fight,"* wrote Cantor.

## In the News....

# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

## The Democrats' Energy Charade

By MICHELE BACHMANN

Earlier this month the House of Representatives voted on an energy bill called the Drill Responsibly in Leased Lands (Drill) Act. The good news, for those of us who actually want to do something to lower gas prices, is that it failed. The bad news is that Democrats will try again before the November elections. We can expect more legislation that claims to increase production, but in reality offers a framework of heavy regulation, litigation and union rules that could prevent new energy supplies from getting to market. And we can expect legislation that would likely hamper current oil and gas exploration.

Consider the details of Drill. It would not have opened new lands to energy exploration. Instead, it would have increased the number of lease sales in the National Petroleum Reserve -- the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge's (ANWR's) sister territory on Alaska's North Slope -- from one lease sale every two years to one every year. The problem here came in the fine print. The bill would have mandated that leasing be done in an undefined, "environmentally responsible" way. We know from experience that such ambiguous language leads to lawsuits and delays. Further, the bill authorized the construction of new pipelines, but would have mandated that they be built in an "environmentally responsible manner" using labor agreements that earmarked all the work for labor union members.

The Democrats' focus on the National Petroleum Reserve is also striking. While it contains comparable known reserves to ANWR -- 10.6 billion barrels compared to an estimated 10.4 billion barrels in the wildlife refuge -- its fields are spread over 23 million acres. The portion of ANWR territory that should be opened to exploration covers a mere 2,000 acres. The National Petroleum Reserve's fields are a little over 250 miles from the current pipeline infrastructure, while ANWR is only 75 miles away. To top it off, currently there is no production in the National Petroleum Reserve because of ongoing litigation. By focusing on a patch of Arctic tundra more spread out than ANWR, a greater distance from current pipelines, and subject to lawsuits not addressed by the legislation, the Democrats chose to respond to American cries for expedited drilling in such a way that would have made it harder to produce energy.

There's more. The Drill Act included "use it or lose it" restrictions that prohibit the federal government from issuing new exploration or production leases anywhere, unless the applicant can certify that every lease currently held is being "diligently developed" (again, to be defined later by lawyers) to produce oil or natural gas. Any lease not meeting the yet-to-be-determined standards would have to be relinquished. Yet federal law already requires lease holders to produce within a set number of years, and energy companies have no incentive to let leases (paid for with up-front bonus fees and annual rent payments regardless of production) go idle. The "inaction" decried by some Democrats overlooks the exploration on these lands that is expensive, ongoing and time consuming.

In the real world, forcing companies to "use" their leases immediately or lose them means making exploration more cost-prohibitive. It will ensure that less exploration will take place. It's akin to forcing a pharmaceutical company to develop a cure for cancer in some arbitrary number of years or else lose the ability to seek the cure.

Unfortunately, the Drill Act is likely to be the first of many phony bills offered to the public this year. They will be aimed at giving the appearance of wanting to increase energy supplies. But in reality they will undermine efforts to increase domestic oil production. Perhaps the Democratic majority will change course in the months ahead, and choose to join with Republicans to adopt commonsense proposals to unlock vast American energy reserves. But that will only happen if the American people make it clear that they know when they are being had.

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