

**WRITTEN STATEMENT OF
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**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES: HARNESSING AMERICA'S
RESOURCES TO CREATE JOBS AND ADDRESS RISING GASOLINE PRICES- PART
III: IMPACT ON SENIORS, WORKING FAMILIES, AND MEMORIAL DAY
VACATIONS**

MAY 25, 2011

Chairman Hastings, Ranking Member Markey, Members of the Committee, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am honored to be here to discuss how rising gas prices impact America's way of life.

It is true that Americans, of all ages and employments, are suffering as a result of gas prices. However, it is not only Americans that suffer, but America herself that pays a correspondingly high price as well. Whereas Americans pay for those high prices out of their wallets, America pays for it out of the coffers of her national dignity. The shame of our continued addition to oil is exposed for all to see.

Just as embarrassing is the return to the chants of "Drill, Baby, Drill." "Drill, Baby, Drill" is not an answer, it's an excuse. It's an excuse to avoid telling the American people the truth. The truth that 70% of the tens of millions of offshore acreage under lease are currently inactive. The truth that America produced more oil last year than any year since 2003 and yet that increase in supply has done nothing to keep down gas prices. The truth that instability in small, oil-producing countries that the U.S. does not import from can still wreak havoc on prices at your local pump. The truth that even if we exploited everything, cast off every environmental protection and shred of national honor in the pursuit of additional oil, we will always rely on oil from other countries and this will always represent a threat to our national security. Always.

Oil robs Americans of their independence. It stifles America's ability to control its own destiny and its own security. Our over-reliance on oil puts our way of life, our ability to drive to work, to start companies, and to even buy groceries into the hands of others.

It also robs us of our values and our ability to stand up in the world for what know is right. Americans could not properly cheer the potential overthrow of Muammar al-Gaddafi because of the resultant spike in the price of gas. The ability of the American people to stand up for freedom, for liberty is compromised, on a daily basis, by our dependence on oil.

Again, many would argue that our problem is not oil, but foreign oil and that we have enough resources in America if only we had the courage to explore and exploit them. There's nothing courageous about that kind of talk. There's nothing patriotic about it, either. It is the talk of people who would see us double-down on a relationship with oil that has turned from symbiotic

to parasitic. Those who advocate more of the same, more oil, more dependence, more debasement of our values endanger this country by embracing a strategy that has been failing Americans for several decades.

This coming weekend is Memorial Day- a weekend where people travel, go to the movies, or enjoy a family barbeque. But Memorial Day is more than just hot dogs and hamburgers. Memorial Day is a day to remember those men and women who had the courage to do what was right by America even when those actions would cost them everything. It is a day to remember that nothing worth anything comes easy or without sacrifice.

When I think back to the sacrifices made by the brave men and women that I served with during my time in combat, I'm reminded of how great a responsibility it is to ask people to sacrifice for something. When I sent soldiers into danger I held on to the idea that their sacrifices would not be in vain.

The sacrifices that people are making this Memorial Day must be for a purpose as well. Soldiers do not sacrifice for the status quo, they sacrifice in the hopes that their efforts can bring about a change. For high gas prices, "Drill, Baby, Drill" is not a change, it's more of the same. If it becomes our strategy for the future, then not only will the hardships Americans suffer at the pump this weekend be for nothing, it's almost guaranteed that they'll be forced to sacrifice again. And again. And again.

There are other solutions, however. Right now, the military is investing in private sector companies to develop advanced generation, drop-in biofuels that can be grown, not mined, right here in America. Advanced research in battery technology has the potential to usher in a new wave of electric vehicles. Finally, simple, regulatory guidance that increases fuel efficiency standards can eliminate the need for billions of gallons of oil.

These are not slogan solutions that roll easily off the tongue. These are real solutions that embrace the innovative, entrepreneurial spirit of the American people. These are solutions that do justice to the sacrifices people are making and will continue to make this coming weekend.

This is not a Memorial Day problem. This is the problem of the decade, of the next fifty years, of the future. It is a threat to both our economic and national security. It cannot be fixed in time for this Memorial Day, but it can be fixed in time for Memorial Days to come. It simply requires leaders who are brave enough to put forth solutions instead of hiding behind excuses. It requires leaders who would wrest control of America's future away from the suffocating grip of oil markets and place it instead into the hands of her people and their innovative spirit. Thank you.