

*This Week in Washington*



WITH CONGRESSMAN  
JO BONNER

## Fuel Prices Continue to Soar

Day after day gas prices continue to hit record highs, and with the summer travel season just around the corner, there doesn't seem to be any relief in sight.

Last week, truck drivers from across the country traveled to Washington, D.C., to protest the soaring cost of diesel fuel, which has increased \$1.15 since last year to \$4.04 a gallon.

Truckers are now paying close to \$1,000 to fill up a tank that might have cost \$600 to fill a few years ago. These truckers represented the frustration families throughout America are feeling every time they fill-up at the pump.

The average price of regular unleaded gasoline has skyrocketed from \$1.49 per gallon in January 2001 to \$2.33 per gallon in January 2007 to a whopping \$3.53 per gallon last week. M

Most analysts predict we will see \$4 gasoline this summer.

Sadly, the soaring prices at the pump are translating into higher costs of living everywhere from the grocery store to the airline ticket counter. Many families are now forced to budget every penny, and many are canceling summer vacations.

Every day someone writes or calls my office asking when Congress is going to take action to lower fuel prices.

Two years ago, then-Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi promised the American people a "commonsense plan" to lower fuel prices, yet the House majority has taken no action to expand our refining capacity, increase domestic production, or explore new alternative energy sources.

Incredibly, some House Democratic leaders have called for an additional 50-cent tax on every gallon of gasoline. The Democratic majority has also voted four-times to raise energy taxes this Congress.

Instead of increasing the supply of American-made energy to help lower prices here at home, the Democrat majority continues to demand more oil from foreign sources.

Surprisingly, the United States is the third-largest oil producer, behind Saudi Arabia and Russia, yet vast areas of potential supply, supply that would help reduce our imports, have been restricted by Congress.

I have worked in the past, and will continue that effort, to open new areas to energy production, such as the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). I believe exploration in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) in Alaska would also aid in alleviating our dependency on foreign resources and global markets.

ANWR could yield up to 10 to 16 billion barrels of oil, enough to replace all of our imports from Saudi Arabia. Development in ANWR would be limited to only 1.5 million acres, out of the refuge's 19 million acre footprint, utilizing advanced technology to prevent environmental damage.

While ANWR is not the only answer to our ever increasing fuel prices – it is a great example of untapped domestic resources. In addition to ANWR, more refineries must be permitted and built.

No refineries have been built in the United States since 1976. Incredibly, at least 100 refineries have been closed during the same time.

Our economy has become increasingly reliant on foreign resources, and we have not done enough to move domestic production forward.

While the majority has the ability to address our energy crisis – they instead – remain silent. I am hopeful the majority will bring forward legislation that will expand our refining capacity and explore new alternative sources of energy, to actually lower the cost of fuel.

### True Sportsmanship

With all of the negative stories in the news each day, I wanted to use this opportunity to share with you an unbelievable story of sportsmanship and selflessness.

Last month, the Central Washington University softball team was hosting the Western Oregon University softball team in a double-header for a bid to the NCAA's Division II playoffs.

That Saturday, Western Oregon won the first game, and Central Washington desperately needed to win the second game to keep its postseason hopes alive.

In the second inning, Western Oregon's right fielder came up to bat with two runners on base. For the first time in her softball career, this player smashed the ball over the center field for an apparent three-run home run.

She sprinted to first base, and as she reached the bag, she looked to watch the ball clear the fence. She missed the bag and turned back to return to base. In the process, she injured her knee and collapsed in pain.

She crawled in horrible pain through the dirt back to first base. According to the rules, none of her teammates could help her or she would be ruled out.

Her coach tried to substitute a runner for her at first, but the umpire ruled she would be credited with a single and two RBIs; her only home run in her four years at Western Oregon would be erased.

Then one of the Central Washington players, presented an unbelievably selfless solution. She offered to carry her opponent around the bases.

The umpires determined that nothing in the rule book precluded their assistance, so she and

her teammate picked up their injured opponent to resume her home-run walk, pausing at each base for her to touch the bag with her uninjured leg.

The home run was the game winner for Western Oregon, but in the end, it seemed that doing the right thing was more important than winning. The players at Central Washington can teach us all a little something about sportsmanship and selflessness.

My staff and I work for you. If we can ever be of service, do not hesitate to call my office toll free at 1-800-288-8721.

*For release the week of Monday, May 05, 2008. For more information please contact Mike Lewis at (202)225-4931.*