

# IN TOUCH WITH TENNESSEE

## FORD: CUT THE 18.4 CENT FEDERAL GAS TAX FOR AT LEAST 30 DAYS

*Tennesseans shouldn't pay for Congress' and President Bush's inaction, nor should they line the pockets of oil company executives.*

While President Bush and the Republican leadership in Washington dither on what to do about gas prices as high as \$4 for some Americans, I believe a 30-day suspension of the 18.4 cent/gallon federal gasoline tax should be adopted. This temporary relief would provide much needed relief for the working man and woman in Memphis and our state.

After the first 30 day suspension, we would assess whether it should be extended. The fact that this country, more than four and a half years after we were attacked, has no real energy plan to get us off Middle East oil is inexcusable. In the meantime, I believe temporary relief for Tennesseans is better than nothing, especially as we learn that oil company CEOs are pocketing hundreds of millions of dollars while we are all left to pay more than \$3 a gallon. We can pay for this tax suspension with a temporary windfall tax on oil companies.

The long term answer is to invest in the clean development and safe use of bio-diesel, wind, solar, coal and nuclear energy to fuel the enormous energy appetite of our



country. We need a new energy policy for America that rewards energy efficiency through innovation and conservation.

In the meantime, Congress should also pass legislation to do three things. First, we should provide incentives for automakers to deploy technology to dramatically increase mile per gallon standards, commonly called CAFE standards, in their new cars and trucks. Second, we should enact more aggressive tax credits for renewable sources of energy and provide tax breaks for companies in Oak Ridge and the East Tennessee Technology Corridor to develop technology that will reduce our dependence on Middle East oil. Third, we should promote technology that will allow farmers to convert crops like soybeans,

corn and Tennessee switchgrass into alternative sources of energy.

The President should stop blaming President Clinton for problems, and start fixing them. Tennesseans and the American people have had enough of the blame game. They want answers, and, most of all in the short term, lower gas prices.

Following the sudden spike in gas prices after Hurricane Katrina, Congressman Ford co-sponsored the "Gas Tax Relief Act of 2005" (H.R. 3683). Under the bill, funding for state highways will not be reduced so states will not have to increase taxes. According to Tennessee law, if the elimination or reduction in the federal gas tax results in reduced funding to Tennessee from the Federal Highway Trust Fund, then the state gas tax will be automatically increased to off-set the decrease in funding. H.R. 3683 includes a provision state law

and preventing states from increasing their state gas tax as a result of the suspension of the federal gas tax. In addition, the bill specifically appropriates funds out of the general fund to offset the funding shortfall to the Federal Highway Trust Fund that would have been caused by the suspension of the federal gas tax.

*If you think you are being gouged at the pump, you should report it to the Tennessee Division of Consumer Affairs at (800) 342-8385, or to the U.S. Department of Energy at <http://gaswatch.energy.gov>.*

**"ALL OF US** *must realize that we have a role to play. We have a responsibility and a burden to teach our children to work hard, play by the rules and do what's right."*

— CONGRESSMAN HAROLD FORD, JR.

## BRINGING TENNESSEE VALUES INTO THE CLASSROOM

*We need to bring Tennessee values into American classrooms. Here are three proposals to make sure that happens:*

### CHARACTER EDUCATION ACT

We should teach our kids more than just the "Three Rs." In addition to reading, writing and arithmetic, we should also teach them what's right.

### CHILDHOOD ADOPTION ACT

By increasing the adoption tax credit, we can make sure that every kid has the chance to live in a loving, caring and nurturing home.

### TEACHING FINANCIAL LITERACY

The Borrowers' Bill of Rights teaches kids at an early age the meaning of credit, the importance of saving and the ABCs of staying ahead of the bills.



*Congressman Ford meets with soldiers in Iraq to discuss Guard issues.*

## MAINTAIN THE NATIONAL GUARD'S OVERALL STRENGTH

With continued security threats, and the ongoing challenge of responding to natural disasters like the recent tornadoes in West and Middle Tennessee, a strong National Guard is needed more than ever before.

I oppose President Bush's attempts to reduce the National Guard's overall size by 17,000, which threatens as many as 1,000 Guard slots in Tennessee. This proposal could not come at a worse time, with Guardsmen comprising almost 50 percent of the forces mobilized in Iraq and Afghanistan.



## THE PRIDE OF TENNESSEE

- The Tennessee Army National Guard's 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment returned from its deployment to Iraq late last year. The 278th, based in Knoxville, provided training for the Iraqi police and army.
- The 194th Engineer Brigade returned home to Jackson last December after a year's deployment to Iraq, where it was responsible for reconstruction efforts in the southern part of the country.
- The 230th Engineer Battalion, Headquarters Company and Company A, which assisted in reconstruction efforts in Iraq, also returned home last December.
- Closer to home, each of these units played a role in recovery efforts after the devastating tornadoes in West and Middle Tennessee last month. Last fall, the Tennessee Air National Guard's 118th Airlift Wing responded to the devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina by flying 100 relief missions to the Gulf Coast.

**"WE HAVE SHORT-CHANGED** *the needs of the National Guard, active duty and returning veterans at a time when the nation is asking for the ultimate sacrifice from soldiers and their families."* — CONGRESSMAN HAROLD FORD, JR.

**"LEADERSHIP IS ABOUT SETTING PRIORITIES and making choices. We need to go back to the kind of bold ideas and big thinking that made this country great."**

**CONGRESSMAN HAROLD FORD, JR.**

## MAKE AMERICA COMPETITIVE AGAIN

THE MAKE AMERICA COMPETITIVE AGAIN ACT will reinvigorate American business, spur innovation and make healthcare easier to buy and more accessible for Tennessee workers and seniors.

### BALANCED BUDGET

A constitutional Balanced Budget Amendment will reduce deficits, increase investments in education, and create jobs so Tennesseans can start working and earning more. Tennessee families have to balance their checkbook; so should the federal government.

### CUT TAXES FOR JOB CREATION

Our tax code is backwards. It should reward innovation and job creation. We need to cut taxes for companies who are innovating to create jobs for the future.

### HELP SMALL BUSINESSES PAY FOR HEALTHCARE

Most Tennesseans think 45 million Americans and 780,000 Tennesseans do not have health insurance. But they do – it is called the emergency room. We need an innovative approach modeled after auto and home insurance – similar to what the Massachusetts Republican governor just put in place – that gives real health insurance coverage to everyone.

### MAKE AMERICA ENERGY INDEPENDENT

We must reduce our addiction to Middle East oil by developing renewable sources of energy, like farm-based fuels from soybeans, corn and switchgrass grown right here in Tennessee.



*Congressman Ford meets with constituents to discuss ways to make America more competitive.*

### GRADUATE 1 MILLION NEW ENGINEERS

One million new engineers will spur innovation and keep us at the cutting edge of emerging technology. We need to change here at home, or else risk falling behind nations like China and India, which graduate four times the number of engineers and a million more students from college than we do.

### SIMPLIFY SENIORS' DRUG BENEFIT

The new Medicare prescription drug benefit is too complicated. In order for drug companies to participate in this program, we should require them to identify the best plan for seniors interested in their plan, especially poor and middle class seniors with high drug costs.

## PROTECT OUR PENSIONS

TO MAKE SURE TENNESSEE WORKERS DO NOT LOSE THEIR PENSIONS, HERE IS WHAT WE HAVE TO DO:

- Require companies to fund their pensions fully if they want federal protection.
- Protect pensions first for companies in bankruptcy proceedings.
- Provide additional time for companies to meet their pension obligations so airlines like Northwest will not have to lay off workers or slash pensions.
- When companies get federal help, senior executives cannot cash out their corporate stocks when pensions fall short.

**“TO RESTORE PEOPLE’S TRUST IN CONGRESS,**  
*we should ban gifts to Congress, double the length of the lobbying ban by former members of Congress, end lavish junkets paid for by private groups, and end all pork spending until we balance the budget. Even then, we should force up or down votes on every piece of pork submitted.”*

– CONGRESSMAN HAROLD FORD, JR.

## NO MORE PORK UNTIL BUDGET IS BALANCED

When money runs tight for families in Shelby County, they make the hard choices necessary to live within their means. The federal government should do the same thing. Here is what we need to do to balance the budget:

### BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

A constitutional amendment will force Congress and the President to balance the budget. Tennessee families cannot spend money unless they have it. The same rule should apply in Washington.

### BAN PORK SPENDING UNTIL BUDGET IS BALANCED

We should not spend a dime on pork until the budget is balanced. With two wars, a debt of more than \$8 trillion, and a deficit of more than \$400 million this year alone, now is not the time to spend money on pet projects.

### INSTITUTE A “STAND BY YOUR PORK” RULE

Members of Congress should sign their name to their projects and explain why they are in the country’s interest. I would sign my name to LeMoyne-Owen’s asthma study; I doubt others would stand up for a \$223 million bridge in Alaska that serves 50 people or \$2 million for water-free urinals.

### TIGHTEN THE BUDGET

We should adopt an across-the-board 1 percent spending cut on everything except veterans and education.

### ENTITLEMENT REFORM

People like me under the age of 40 should be willing to postpone Social Security checks until they reach the age of 70. We are the most blessed generation in history; we should be willing to give a little back.

### ESTATE TAX REFORM

The estate tax should stay in place, but the rate should be reduced to the capital gains rate and it should only apply to estates worth more than \$10 million.

### STOP WASTEFUL SPENDING

We should freeze the budgets of the 16 federal agencies that cannot audit their books. This kind of financial mismanagement is why we cannot account for \$24.5 billion spent in 2003. If these agencies were businesses, they would be out of business or under new management.



*Congressman Ford discusses education issues with his youngest constituents at St. George’s School.*

## CONGRESSMAN FORD WILL APPEAR AT THESE EVENTS NEAR YOU

**CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL BACCALAUREATE**  
Sunday, May 7, 3:00 p.m.  
The First Baptist Church  
200 E. Parkway North

**PROFESSIONAL INSURANCE AGENTS OF MEMPHIS LUNCHEON**  
Monday, May 15, 11:30 a.m.  
Racquet Club of Memphis

**MEMPHIS IN MAY BBQ FEST**  
Thurs., May 18 – Sat., May 20  
Tom Lee Park  
Downtown

**MITCHELL HIGH SCHOOL 2006 COMMENCEMENT**  
Friday, May 19, 7:00 p.m.  
Mid-South Coliseum

*For tickets or more information, call the congressional office at (901) 544-4131.*

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