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Normally I wouldn't quote CBS News, but with oil closing at over \$119.00 per barrel it is worth noting a recent CBS report on gas prices. How fast are gas prices rising? Well, according to CBS they've now nearly doubled in just over three years. A lot of folks in our part of Texas have been asking what Congress is going to do about high gas prices. Unfortunately it seems to me Congress is doing exactly the opposite of what it should be doing to lower energy prices generally and gas prices in particular.

Everyone understands supply and demand. In the past year Congress has passed a bill, which I opposed, to raise taxes on energy and to make production of domestic energy resources more expensive. Just this week another Member of Congress announced a plan to make drilling in parts of the Gulf of Mexico off limits. Saudi Arabia has announced a hold on plans to further increase long-term production capacity from its vast oil fields, and unrest in Nigeria and other oil producing countries has shown how vulnerable supplies from those areas can be. In short, our own government and world politics are making supplies tight and artificially more expensive.

Between price and the use of alternative fuels U.S. oil consumption is projected to fall by as much as 2% over the next year, but world demand during the next five years is projected to rise about 30%. Meaning that while supplies are going down or suffering from artificial inflation through new taxes, demand due to the growing energy consumption of such nations as China and India is increasing, despite our efforts to reduce consumption here in America.

The result is a "perfect storm" of falling world supply, rising world demand, and rising taxes driving prices up for average Americans. What's worse, there are some who appear to be quietly happy with this situation believing that rising prices in America will discourage fossil fuel consumption and reduce global warming.

My approach to solving our energy supply problem is to increase production of ALL types of energy here in America. Until we produce more energy of all kinds here at home, we will be at the mercy of unstable overseas producers and in daily competition with the emerging economies of China and India. I've written to you before about the "No Excuses Energy Act" and I'm honored to report that slowly, but surely, this approach is gaining support. To-date 19 Members of Congress have signed on as cosponsors of the bill and there continues to be media attention as more and more people recognize that conservation has its place, but until we increase domestic supply of ALL types of energy we are only dealing with half the answer to our energy crisis.

Another Short-Term Farm Bill Extension Passed*Time to Get Partisan Politics Out of Farm Policy*

The new Majority in Congress has made a habit of waiting until past the last minute to pass important legislation, and apparently this year's Farm Bill will be no exception. After several extensions and innumerable promises to get the bill done, America's farmers and ranchers are still waiting to know what the rules are for crops that are,



in some cases, already in the ground.

As I've been advocating for more than a year, the best thing for America's agriculture industry, absent passing a new Farm Bill, is to get the Farm Bill out of this year's partisan politics by passing a long-term extension of the existing Bill. It has worked well for producers, has saved the taxpayers money, and is the most cost effective alternative on the table.

The Democratic Leadership in Congress worries too much about politics and not enough about doing its job. The Farm Bill is a prime example. With the latest extension running out another short-term extension has been passed. America's farmers, ranchers, and consumers deserve better. I will keep pushing for prompt action to bring a Farm Bill to a final vote.

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U.S. Supreme Court to Rule on the Second Amendment Case



The U.S. Supreme Court currently has under consideration an historic case dealing with the Second Amendment. On March 18, 2008, the Court heard oral arguments in *D.C. v. Heller*, a case challenging the constitutionality of Washington, D.C.'s ban on handguns. This case is the first time in several decades that the Supreme Court will rule on an individual's rights under the Second Amendment.

I strongly believe that the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution provides important guarantees of our right to "keep and bear arms." With this case, the Supreme Court has an opportunity to affirm that this right is an individual right, not a collective right. Doing so would be a significant blow to those who continually assault our Second Amendment rights.

Along with many other Members of Congress, I signed an amicus curiae or "friend of the court" brief submitted in *D.C. v. Heller*. [To view the brief in PDF format please click this link.](#) The brief outlines the legislative history and intent of the Second Amendment and argues that D.C.'s gun ban is unconstitutional. The Court is expected to make its decision this summer. I hope the Court agrees with our brief and finds the D.C. handgun ban unconstitutional, but regardless of how the Court finds in this case, I will continue to work in Congress to protect our Second Amendment rights.

[H.R. 4900](#) the "Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives Reform and Firearms Modernization Act of 2007," makes a number of changes to the laws governing the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms with the goal of making the regulations easier and less complex on small gun stores. I am cosponsoring H.R. 4900 because it reduces red tape without significantly compromising safety or the intent of the regulations. The bill is bi-partisan and currently has over 130 co-sponsors. [For a summary of H.R. 4900 click here.](#)

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