

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-1201**

Sali: Pelosi wrong to silence those who want lower gas prices

By Congressman Bill Sali

I'll never forget Aug. 1, 2008. On that day, Republicans in Congress revolted against Speaker Nancy Pelosi's heavy-handed silencing of the people's voice on energy.

Instead of allowing Congress to vote on legislation to drill for crude oil (and reduce gas and diesel prices), Speaker Pelosi abruptly adjourned the House for a five-week vacation. She wouldn't even allow members to speak against her stalling tactics. Instead she tried to silence those who disagree with her.

Congress should not have adjourned. People are struggling to fill their gas tanks and pay their bills. Congress has a job to do, and America's legislative branch should keep working until the job is done.

We tried to keep the House in session but were outvoted. So after Congress adjourned, 50 members of Congress, including me, stayed on the House floor and spoke about the need to boost American energy exploration and production.

As we started to speak, the microphones got turned off. The lights were shut off. The C-Span cameras stopped broadcasting. The Capitol Police tried to clear the media gallery to keep reporters from writing about what was happening.

Through it all, we kept right on talking, speaking directly to the visitors in the House gallery, who came to hear their representatives talk. And even though Congress was adjourned, Republicans stayed in Washington, D.C., to continue advocating the need to make our country energy-independent.

We must increase production of American crude oil and natural gas by drilling in places like ANWR and offshore. Most of the calls and letters to my office favor this approach. Still, Speaker Pelosi thinks the need to drill now is a "hoax" and says she has "no plans" to allow a vote on any legislation to drill.

She says we will not "drill our way out of this problem." While it is true that America's energy future will require better incentives for conservation and for bringing more alternative energy on line, we cannot expect to reduce gas and diesel prices without increasing American supply of crude oil. To get that added supply, we must drill.

Right now, there are at least a dozen different bills that contain drilling, conservation and alternatives. Also, I have introduced legislation — the Family Energy Relief Act — that would provide Idahoans with immediate relief from high gas prices in the form of a tax credit.

Shouldn't speaker Pelosi at least start bipartisan discussions toward a solution?  
Shouldn't Congress' committees at least hold hearings on legislation that would  
provide relief? I believe so.

Speaker Pelosi knows the public wants drilling. She knows a majority of the House  
members will vote to drill, if only given the chance.

Last Friday, I was proud to be among the 50 members of Congress who spoke out  
and who continue to fight for our nation's energy independence. Over the coming  
weeks, I hope you will continue to make your voices heard, too.

If you received a letter or e-mail from me asking your opinion on American energy  
independence, please get those opinions to me. If you did not receive a letter and  
would like to weigh in, please contact my office. Continue to send me your gas  
receipts, and I will get them to Speaker Pelosi.