

**Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman**  
**Lobbying Reform and Energy Cost Press Conference**  
**April 27, 2006**

I'm pleased to be joined today by my colleagues Representative Louise Slaughter and Representative Kendrick Meek.

Gasoline prices have been skyrocketing throughout the country. In Florida, California, Wisconsin, Connecticut, and even in the nation's Capitol, prices have exceeded \$3 a gallon. It is time for the government to step up to the plate.

Earlier this week, the President's spokesman said, "This is not something we got into overnight and it is not something we are going to get out of overnight." And he is absolutely right. From day one, this Administration set out to do the bidding of the big oil companies. They have worked overtime for the oil industry over the last five years, and Congress has worked right alongside, rubberstamping their every proposal.

Upon taking office, Vice President Cheney convened an energy task force that secretly met with energy company executives to develop the nation's energy policy. He never even met with consumer or environmental groups.

The result was a national energy policy that failed to restrain energy prices, that failed to plan for the future, and that failed to take into account our environment or national security. Congress endorsed and expanded these misguided policies in the energy bill we passed last year.

Five years later, we are reaping the fruit of the Administration's energy policy. Gasoline prices have doubled. Home heating prices have soared. Natural gas prices have risen to unprecedented levels. And we are more dependent than ever on imported oil.

Consider that throughout this Administration, energy costs have increased. Between 2001, when Vice President Cheney's energy task force announced the Administration's energy plan, to August 2005, when Congress passed Republican energy legislation codifying and expanding the President's policies, gasoline prices have skyrocketed. There's a direct correlation between the Administration's policies and gasoline prices. The more success the President and the Vice President have had in implementing their energy policies, the higher gasoline prices go ... and the richer the oil companies become.

The Administration has established the energy policy it wanted, and the result is that gasoline prices have doubled. Tomorrow, the House will have an opportunity to restore sanity to our energy policies. But I fear that we will squander it.

The legislation we will debate tomorrow involves ethics and lobby reform. It's critical to our nation's energy policy because the root cause of the problems we face is the culture of corruption that has engulfed Washington. Energy policies are being written in secret by the energy industry to enrich their profits. Unless we break the link between lobbyists, campaign contributions, and special interest legislation, we will never have a rational energy policy.

Unfortunately, the prospects for reform look dim. The legislation drafted by the Republican House leadership is a sham. It does virtually nothing to break the stranglehold that oil industry lobbyists have on Congress. The Democratic Leader has drafted legislation containing genuine reform of the legislative branch, but it is doubtful that she will even be allowed a vote on this much needed legislation.

I serve as the Ranking Member of the Government Reform Committee, which has oversight of the executive branch. In our Committee, we adopted genuine executive branch reform by a unanimous 32-0 vote. This legislation would end secret meetings between lobbyists and executive branch officials. And it would close the revolving door between lobbyists and the executive branch.

But this legislation, which was unanimously endorsed by the committee of jurisdiction, is not part of the Republican leadership package, and it is uncertain whether an amendment to add its provisions will even be made in order.

Washington is mired in scandal, while the nation is being gouged at the gasoline pump and oil companies are reporting record profits. These events may seem unrelated, but they are not. There's a pervasive culture of corruption gripping Washington, and we must break it before we can hope to enact true energy reform.