



"I'M ASKING YOU TO BELIEVE. Not just in my ability to bring about real change in Washington ... I'm asking you to believe in yours."

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Remarks of Senator Barack Obama: Press Avail on Energy Plan

Indianapolis, IN | April 25, 2008

Everywhere I go in Indiana, and across this country, I'm talking to folks who are working harder and harder just to get by. At a time when our economy is in turmoil and wages are stagnant, hardworking families are struggling to pay rising costs, and few costs are rising more than the one folks pay at the pump. For the well-off in this country, high gas prices are mostly an annoyance, but to most Americans, they're a huge problem, bordering on a crisis.

Here in Indiana, gas costs about \$3.60 a gallon - and across the country, gas costs more than at any time in almost thirty years. Over the last year alone, the price of oil has shot up more than 80%, reaching a record high of more than \$110 a barrel - all of which helps explain why the top oil companies made \$123 billion last year.

Now, there's nothing wrong with a company being rewarded for its success. Our economy has always been powered by innovation and ingenuity. But the reason Americans keep going to the pump isn't because oil companies are being particularly innovative. It's because Washington politicians didn't deal with the challenge of alternative energy when they had the chance.

When George Bush asked Dick Cheney to come up with our energy policy a few years ago, he met with the environmental groups once, and he met with the renewable energy folks once, and he met with the oil and gas companies 40 times. And yet, we also know this problem goes deeper than the Bush administration. Because we've been talking about high gas prices in this country since Americans were sitting in gas lines in the 1970s. And we've heard promises about energy independence from every President - Democratic and Republican - since Richard Nixon. And yet the only thing that's different now is that we are even more dependent on foreign oil, our planet is in even greater peril, and the price of gas keeps going up and up and up.

So unless we're willing to challenge the broken system in Washington, and stop letting lobbyists use their clout to get their way, nothing else is going to change. And the reason I'm running for President is to challenge that system. I'm the only candidate in this race who's worked to rein in the power of lobbyists by passing historic ethics reforms in Illinois and in the Senate, and I'm the only one who isn't taking a dime from Washington lobbyists.

We need a President who's looking out for families in Indiana, not just doing what's good for multinational corporations, and that's the kind of President I'll be. It isn't right that oil companies are making record profits at a time when ordinary Americans are going into debt trying to pay rising energy costs. In the paper today, there was an article about how millions of Americans are falling behind on their energy bills, and a record number of Americans could face energy shut-offs over the next two months. That's why we'll put a windfall profits tax on oil companies and use it to help Indiana families pay their heating and cooling bills and reduce energy costs. We'll also take steps to reduce the price of oil and increase transparency in how prices are set so we can ensure that energy companies aren't bending the rules. And to help Indiana families meet the rising cost of gas, we'll put a middle class tax cut in their pockets that will save them \$1,000 a year, and we'll eliminate income taxes altogether for seniors making less than \$50,000.

So these are a few short-term steps we can take to ease the burden that Indiana families are bearing as a result of our failed energy policy. But the truth is, there is no easy answer to our energy crisis - and we need a President who's going to be straight with us about that; a president who's going to tell the

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American people not just what they want to hear, but what they need to know. And what they need to know is that any real solution isn't going to come about overnight. It's going to take time.

To bring about real change, we're going to have to make long-term investments in clean energy and energy efficiency. That's why I reached across the aisle in the Senate to come up with a plan to double our fuel efficiency standards that won support of lawmakers who had never supported raising those standards before. And that's why I voted for an energy bill that was far from perfect because it was the largest investment in renewable energy in history, and I fought to eliminate the tax giveaways to oil companies that were slipped into that bill.

And as President, I'll work to solve this energy crisis once and for all. We'll invest \$150 billion over the next ten years in establishing a green energy sector that will create up to 5 million new jobs - and those are jobs that pay well and can't be outsourced. We'll invest in clean energies like solar, wind, and biodiesel. And we'll help make sure that the fuel we're using is more efficient.

The candidates with the Washington experience - my opponents - are good people. They mean well. But they've been in Washington for a long time, and even with all that experience they talk about, nothing has happened. This country didn't raise fuel efficiency standards for over thirty years. So what have we got for all that experience? Gas that's approaching \$4 a gallon - because you can fight all you want inside Washington, but until you change the way it works, you won't be able to make the changes Americans need.

In the end, we'll only ease the burden of gas prices on our families when Hoosiers and people all across America say "enough." It's time to free ourselves from the tyranny of oil, and stop funding both sides in the war on terror. It's time to save this planet for our children. The time is now - not after the next election or the one after that. You shouldn't accept any more excuses for why it can't be done. It won't happen tomorrow. But if we can come together in this election, we can and will begin, and the first step is changing the way business is done in Washington. If we can do that, then the energy crisis is one I'm confident we can solve.



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