

Don't blame Trump for \$3 gas

By: Alfredo Ortiz and Stephen Moore

Democrats recently took a brief detour from their identity politics agenda to attack President Trump for the rise in gasoline prices. With the economy booming under Trump with record low unemployment, faster economic growth, rising consumer and business confidence, soaring investment, and pay raises and bonuses for five million workers, Democrats have been longing for any piece of bad news they can find.

They finally found something to complain about in \$3 a gallon gas, up about 50 cents a gallon from last year. This pain at the pump has put a damper on summer vacation plans for many Americans. Cue opportunistic Democrats, who are blaming Trump's Middle East policy.

"President Trump's reckless decision to pull out of the Iran deal has led to higher oil prices," said Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.), who, before it became politically inconvenient, also opposed the Iran nuclear deal. "These higher oil prices are translating directly to soaring gas prices, something we know disproportionately hurts middle and lower income people."

So let's see if we have this straight. According to Schumer and his Democratic colleagues, Trump doesn't deserve any credit for the cavalry of good news on the economy, but he is responsible for the one negative piece of news: gas prices. Now for a dose of high octane reality. Almost no serious energy analyst takes this blame Trump spin seriously. We know why gas prices have spiked. The Saudis reduced their oil output by about a half million barrels a day in order to drive up the world price, and the strategy worked, at least temporarily.

The big story here is that the one restraint on Saudi manipulation of the world oil price is the shale oil and gas revolution here at home in the United States. One thing that Schumer didn't mention is that under Trump, who is all in on producing American energy, the United States has just surpassed Saudi Arabia in oil production.

If it were not for the shale revolution in states like Texas, Oklahoma and North Dakota, the Saudis would have been able to push gas prices much higher than they have. But guess what? The Democrats have generally opposed American oil and gas production because they are obsessed with global warming. Liberals think fracking is

evil. These are the same Democrats who have for years opposed seemingly every domestic oil development initiative to increase supply and put downward pressure on prices. Their opposition has amounted to the equivalent of a tax increase on every American, with the poor hurt the most.

Democrats have done everything they can to slow down or ban fracking and the shale energy explosion, which is responsible for the near doubling of domestic oil production over the past decade. President Obama issued stringent fracking regulations to slow the growth. Blue states such as New York and Vermont have banned fracking outright. While oil production on private land has surged because of fracking, it actually decreased on public land because of Democratic opposition.

Then there was the Keystone XL Pipeline fiasco. Despite dozens of reviews highlighting its environmental safety, the Obama administration and leading Democrats scuttled the project that would have imported nearly one million barrels of crude oil a day from our friendly neighbor to the north. In 2014, Schumer cast the deciding vote in the Senate against legislation to construct the Keystone XL Pipeline.

Democrats have also long opposed offshore drilling in the Alaskan Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, one of the largest oil reserves on the planet. They have been fighting proposals to tap into its estimated 10 billion barrels of oil since the 1970s. No Democrat voted for tax cut legislation passed late last year that finally opens it up to development. Government analysis finds drilling there will reduce gas prices by a few cents a gallon.

Democrats have also advocated for higher gas prices in the form of a higher gas tax. In 2015, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) said, "If there's ever going to be an opportunity to raise the gas tax, the time when gas prices are so low, oil prices are so low, is the time to do it." If she was successful, today's pain at the pump would only be exacerbated.

Ultimately, the best way to keep gas prices as low as possible is for Democrats to give up their opposition to domestic oil production and permanently shelve their gas

tax increase proposals. This strategy is the best way to ensure that Saudi Arabia can't cripple the U.S. economy, as it did in the 1970s, with embargoes and price raising strategies.

Every barrel of oil the United States adds to world production will reduce the price of gasoline at the pump. Every liberal impediment to producing America's near limitless shale oil and gas supplies will make driving for

millions more expensive. Someone needs to tell Democrats you can't be for low prices for gas but against drilling for it.

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