

Sample Op-Ed

Prepared by Max Chalfin



Harvard Model
Congress Asia

HELP THE SENATE BLOCK THE PETROL ACT

Senator Greenfield Clearsky (D-CA) has recently brought before the Senate Subcommittee on Science and Health the Prevention of Extraneous Texan Rigs in Oil-rich Locales (PETROL) Act. If passed, the PETROL Act will severely limit the number of new oil derricks to be constructed in Texas. This bill represents exactly the sort of misguided environmentalism which threatens to deprive our country of its economic primacy and make us strategically vulnerable.

The construction, maintenance, and operation of oil derricks provide a substantial fraction of local jobs in non-urban Texas. By limiting growth in this sector, the PETROL Act will leave rural workers behind, tragically fragmenting the Texan middle class. Of course, the backlash will not only be at the local level. A heightened dependence on foreign oil will greatly jeopardize the United States' strategic position. Perhaps the young voters of the 21st century can not remember the manipulation of oil prices carried out by foreign suppliers during the 1980s. Since we are currently engaged in military deployment in a region home to several industrial OPEC nations, we cannot afford to accept further vulnerability at this time.

Finally, what shortsighted idealists such as Senator Clearsky have not properly considered is that their proposals do not achieve the ends of environmental protection they have set out to achieve. Most pollution caused by the oil industry results from the process of and inherent risk associated with transporting oil — powering freighters, constructing ports, and cleaning occasional spills. By forcing oil production out of Texas and into Alaska, or by consuming more foreign oil, the PETROL Act will do considerably more harm than good.

