

but no infrastructure to utilize it. It is also clean. I also know this country has a huge supply of coal. The Germans refined gas from coal in WW2. The tree huggers and go gooders will never permit it. We need to stop any use of foreign oil as soon as possible. They have us over a barrel . . . no pun intended.

BOB and DIANNE, *Soda Springs.*

I am a disabled 52-year-old man on a fixed income; SSI. I am a past City of Pocatello employee for almost 20 years in the field of law enforcement. I have no retirement and depend solely on SSI income. I was born and raised in Pocatello, worked for the municipality and now struggles to survive. I now stay home or go to medical appointments. I no longer has discretionary funds, not even for gas.

That's my story, and I'm stuck with it.

MICHAEL.

Thank you so much for your honest interest in the everyday Idahoan and the effect that gas prices have on our lives. I do not have a unique story to share with you. I am wholeheartedly in agreement that we need new sources for our energy usage. I believe that we need to drill for oil on our own soil. It would seem to me that there must be ways to do that and keep environmental concerns in mind. I believe that there are things that can be done to make vehicles use gasoline more efficiently; perhaps even run on alternate materials. Public transportation needs updated and should include ways to help all members of our population.

I am very fortunate that my husband and I have jobs that have not been cut due to the recent rise in energy costs, but we are making changes in the way we live our day. I got a job closer to home, we stopped going for evening drives as a form of entertainment, we are not going on a vacation this summer, we combine our errands into one trip, we had a more efficient heating/cooling system installed in our home, and got a more efficient roof. We are doing what we know how to do, as I imagine are most people.

I do want to suggest that docking the oil companies with wind-fall taxes isn't going to help. They will just hike the prices of the gas to cover their taxes. Some creative minds need to be gathered together to help the U.S. get themselves out of the mess they've gotten themselves into. It is time to cut the ties with eastern oil producers. That would seem a much more efficient and strong message than fighting with their countries' leaders. Big oil companies will, no doubt, have to make some changes to the way they do business. We all have to make changes. So many people have lost their jobs. For some people, the cost of gas offsets the income they make by going to work.

I hope these thoughts will be of some help to you. I thank you, again, for working to help all of us.

PEGGY, *Boise.*

NATIVE AMERICAN HOUSING ASSISTANCE

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, today I applaud the passage of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Reauthorization Act of 2008, NAHASDA. This act will continue to provide thousands of homes for American Indian and Alaska Native families.

The bill passed today reauthorizes and enhances the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act, NAHASDA, adopted in

1996. The act provides formula-based block grant assistance to Indian tribes, which allows them the flexibility to design housing programs to address the needs of their communities.

The system set up by this housing law has been very successful in addressing the housing crisis in Indian Country, and this reauthorization will go even further in providing homes to thousands of Indian families who desperately need them. Instead of being a one size fits all national program; it provides grants to tribes, allowing them to tailor housing programs to fit their needs. It has already enabled thousands of families to rent and own homes, and now thousands more will have access to much needed housing.

Despite the continued success of NAHASDA, there is still a housing crisis in Indian Country, where 90,000 Indian families are homeless or underhoused. Of those who do have housing, approximately 40 percent of on-reservation housing is considered inadequate, and over one-third of Indian homes are overcrowded.

The legislation passed today will strengthen NAHASDA by providing tribes with increased flexibility, with the goal of producing more homes in Indian Country. The bill will allow funds to be utilized for community buildings such as daycare centers, laundromats, and multipurpose community centers, with the hope of not only building homes but also building communities. The bill also authorizes a study to assess the existing data sources for determining the need for housing and funding programs.

Adequate housing is the first and most necessary step in building a strong community, and many people in Indian Country have gone on for far too long without a roof over their heads. This bill is more than just a housing act—it will give tribes more authority over their own land and truly help build stronger communities in Indian Country.

Mr. President, please allow me to thank Leader REID, Senator MURKOWSKI, Senator DODD, Senator INOUE, Senator AKAKA and Senator SHELBY for their commitment in getting this legislation passed.

Thank you to the Senate staff for their hard work on this bill, including Allison Binney, Heidi Frechette, Tracy Hartzler-Toon, David Mullan, Jim Hall, Jenn Fogel-Bublick, and Mark Calabria.

Also, thank you to Representative KILDEE, Representative FRANK, Representative WATT, and their staff, Kimberly Teehee, Dominique McCoy, Cassandra Duhaney, and Hilary West.

Finally, this bill would not have been possible without the tireless work of tribal leaders, the National American Indian Housing Council, the National Congress of American Indians, the National Indian Health Board, and Indian housing advocates.

(At the request of Mr. REID the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.

NASA

• Mr. NELSON of Florida. Madam President, we have just passed the NASA reauthorization bill. It is noteworthy that next week, October 1, the 50th anniversary of the start of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and if my colleagues will recall, that was 1958. My colleagues may remember what was happening. The Soviet Union had surprised us by putting into orbit the first satellite, Sputnik and America, in midst of the cold war among two superpowers, was absolutely shocked that we were behind in our technology; that we could not be premier. Then, lo and behold, 3 years later, they shocked us again by putting the first human in orbit, Yuri Gagarin, for one orbit when, in fact, we only had a rocket, the Redstone, that could get a human into suborbit. Then we put Alan Shepard and subsequently Gus Grissom in suborbit, and then, in the meantime, the Soviet Union put Titov into several orbits. Of course, the eyes of the world then focused in on Cape Canaveral, when a young marine, one of the original seven American astronauts, named John Glenn, climbed into that capsule knowing that the Atlas rocket had a 20-percent chance of failure. He rode it into the heavens for only three orbits. There was an indication on the instrument panel that his heat shield was loose, and as he started the deorbit burn, John Glenn knew that if that was an accurate reading, on reentry into the Earth's fiery atmosphere, heating up in excess of 3,000 degrees Fahrenheit, he would burn up. It is that memorable time when we heard his last words before he went into the blackout period on radio transmissions: John Glenn humming "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." It is hard to tell that story without getting a lump in my throat.

Of course, what then happened, months before we flew John Glenn, we had a young President who said: We are going to the Moon and back within 9 years. This Nation came together. It focused the political will, it provided the resources, and it did what people did not think could be done.

A generation of young people so inspired by this Nation's space program started pouring into the universities, into math and science and technology and engineering. That generation that was educated in high technology has been the generation that has led us to be the leader in a global marketplace by producing the technology, the innovations, the intellectual capital that has allowed us to continue to be that leader.

So it is with that background that this Senator, who has the privilege of chairing the Space and Science Subcommittee within the Commerce Committee, wants to say: Happy birthday, NASA. We are sending to the House of

Representatives tonight this NASA reauthorization bill, which will give the flexibility to the next President, and his designee as the next leader of NASA, the flexibility in a very troubled program that has not had the resources to do all the things that are demanded of it to try to continue to keep America preeminent in space; also to continue to have access to our own International Space Station that we built and paid for; and then to chart out a course for the future exploration of the heavens that will keep us fulfilling our destiny of our character as an American people, which is that by nature we are explorers and adventurers.

We never want to give that up. If we ever do, we will be a second-rate nation. But we would not because we have always had a frontier, a new frontier. In the development of this country, it used to be westward. Now it is upward and it is inward and that is the frontier we want to continue to explore.

So happy birthday, NASA. It is my hope that we will have the House of Representatives take this up on their suspension calendar tomorrow.

I wish to give great credit to the staff who are in the room for the majority and the minority. They all have worked at enormous overload—Chan Lieu and Jeff Bingham. Jeff, despite the fact of having suffered a heart attack earlier this year, and we didn't even let him out of his recuperative bed but that I was on the phone with him getting him to start corraling all these other Senators and House Members so we could get a consensus, so we could come together in an agreement.

The result tonight is the fact that this has been cleared in a 100-Member Senate, when Senators are on edge and they are always looking for something to object to, and there is no objection here, as ruled by the Presiding Officer.

My congratulations to all the people, to the staff of the Commerce Committee, and to the staff of the Science and Technology Committee in the House of Representatives, chaired by Congressman BART GORDON of Tennessee. I am very grateful for everybody coming together and making this happen.

I want to say a special thanks to all of the Senate staff who worked so hard on the NASA authorization bill. Not just Chan Lieu and Jeff Bingham, but also Ann Zulkosky and Beth Bacon on the Commerce Committee, as well as Art Maples, my Congressional Fellow. We also had tremendous support from our legislative council, Lloyd Ator and John Baggeley. Thank you all for your hard work and dedication.●

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CEDAR RAPIDS COMMUNITY EDUCATION

● Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, in Iowa and across the United States, a

new school year has begun. As you know, Iowa public schools have an excellent reputation nationwide, and Iowa students' test scores are among the highest in the Nation.

I would like to take just a few minutes today to salute the dedicated teachers, administrators, and school board members in the Cedar Rapids Community School District, and to report on their participation in a unique Federal partnership to repair and modernize school facilities.

This fall marks the 10th year of the Iowa Demonstration Construction Grant Program. That is its formal name, but it is better known among educators in Iowa as the Harkin grants for Iowa public schools. Since 1998, I have been fortunate to secure a total of \$121 million for the State government in Iowa, which selects worthy school districts to receive these grants for a range of renovation and repair efforts, everything from updating fire safety systems to building new schools or renovating existing facilities. In many cases, this Federal funding is used to leverage public and/or private local funding, so it often has a tremendous multiplier effect in a local school district.

The Cedar Rapids Community School District received Harkin grants totaling \$4,912,132 which it used to help modernize and make safety improvements throughout the district. Six Harkin construction grants totaling \$3,750,000 have helped with several projects. A 1999 grant was used to help build Viola Gibson Elementary School, and Harkin grants helped the district build additions for science and fine arts at Jefferson, Kennedy, and Washington High Schools; additions which included media centers and additional classrooms at Hoover, Roosevelt, and McKinley Middle Schools and Pierce and Wilson Elementary Schools and to also make plumbing and HVAC improvements at McKinley. These schools are the modern, state-of-the-art facilities that befit the educational ambitions and excellence of this school district. Indeed, they are the kind of schools that every child in America deserves.

The district also received six fire safety grants totaling \$1,162,132 to make improvements at buildings throughout the district. The improvements included upgraded fire alarm systems, electrical work and other safety repairs. The Federal grants have made it possible for the district to provide quality and safe schools for their students.

Excellent schools do not just pop up like mushrooms after a rain. They are the product of vision, leadership, persistence, and a tremendous amount of collaboration among local officials and concerned citizens. I salute the entire staff, administration, and governance in the Cedar Rapids Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education—John Laverty, Keith

Westercamp, Lisa Kuzela, Ann Rosenthal, Melissa Kiliper-Ernst, Mary Meisterling, and Judy Goldberg, and former board members Richard Bradford, Ken Childress, Doug Henderson, Jeff Ilten, Dennis Kral, Becki Lynch, Susan McDermott, Ron Olson, and Al Smith.

I would also like to recognize superintendent David Markward, former superintendent Lew Finch, and staff members including Doug Smith, Bob Gertsen, Steve Graham, Susan Peterson, Tom Day, Chris McGuire, Barb Harms, Brian Krob, Kathy Conley, Connie Tesar, Wayne Knapp, Larry Martin, Bill Utterback, Joyce Fowler, Tim Virden, Rick Netolicky, Becky DeWald, Ralph Plagman, Bob Tesar, Terry Strait, Mary Wilczynski, Shannon Bucknell, Richard Sedlacek, Ken Morgan, Valerie Dolezal, Mike Allen, Steve Hilby, Kristen Ricky, Brian Litts, Gregg Petersen, Kathleen Reyner, and David Dvorak, and the following individuals from Shive Hattery: George Kanz, Keith Johnk, Jim Knowles, Doug DuCharme, Tim Fehr, and Chad Siems.

As we mark the 10th anniversary of the Harkin school grant program in Iowa, I am obliged to point out that many thousands of school buildings and facilities across the United States are in dire need of renovation or replacement. In my State of Iowa alone, according to a recent study, some 79 percent of public schools need to be upgraded or repaired. The harsh reality is that the average age of school buildings in the United States is nearly 50 years.

Too often, our children visit ultra-modern shopping malls and gleaming sports arenas on weekends, but during the week go to school in rundown or antiquated facilities. This sends exactly the wrong message to our young people about our priorities. We have to do better.

That is why I am deeply grateful to the professionals and parents in the Cedar Rapids Community School District. There is no question that a quality public education for every child is a top priority in that community. I salute them, and wish them a very successful new school year.●

CHARITON COMMUNITY EDUCATION

● Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, in Iowa and across the United States, a new school year has begun. As you know, Iowa public schools have an excellent reputation nationwide, and Iowa students' test scores are among the highest in the Nation.

I would like to take just a few minutes today to salute the dedicated teachers, administrators, and school board members in the Chariton Community School District, and to report on their participation in a unique Federal partnership to repair and modernize school facilities.

This fall marks the 10th year of the Iowa Demonstration Construction