

hockey team; Robbie Rogers of the University of Maryland, 2008 men's soccer team; Gary Russell of Prince George's County, 2008 men's boxing team; Jamie Schroeder of Johns Hopkins University Medical School, 2008 men's rowing team; Phil Scholz of Loyola College, 2008 Paralympic men's swimming team; Chris Seitz of the University of Maryland, 2008 men's soccer team; Keli Smith of the University of Maryland, 2008 women's field hockey team; Scott Steele of Baltimore County, 2008 men's wrestling team; Natalie Woolfolk of Arnold, Maryland, 2008 women's weightlifting team.

It is with special pride that I recognize the historical accomplishments of Baltimore's own Michael Phelps. Michael Phelps has gone where no Olympian has gone before. In this year's Olympic Games he won a record-breaking eight Gold Medals. That is a Gold Medal for every race he swam in.

Before Michael Phelps shattered the record, the most Gold Medals ever won by an individual at a single Olympics was seven. That feat was accomplished by another American swimmer, Mark Spitz. And when Spitz captured his seven Gold Medals in the 1972 Olympic Games, everyone said it couldn't be topped.

Everyone, that is, except for Michael Phelps.

The intrepid Michael Phelps didn't just break world records at this year's Olympic Games; he smashed them. He didn't simply win Gold Medals in every race he swam; he also set seven new Olympic world records along the way.

Like so many proud Marylanders and proud Americans, I watched Michael Phelps win race after race. And leave it to Michael Phelps to leave some of the best racing for last. What a race he swam August 16th. What a race; what a nailbiter. Michael Phelps, on his quest to win his seventh consecutive Gold Medal—this one in the men's 100 meter butterfly—trailing behind, and then he came roaring back from seventh place at the turn to edge Serbia's Milorad Cavic by one one-hundredth of a second. What a race. What an epic race.

I will also never forget Phelps' last race of this year's Olympic Games. It was the race that would determine whether Phelps would become the first Olympic athlete to win eight Gold Medals during a single Olympic Games. It was the race that if won would mark Phelps as the greatest swimmer and, perhaps, the greatest Olympian of all time.

I watched that historic race, as did so many Americans, with a racing heart. It was the men's 4 x 100 medley. When the race was finished—giving Phelps his eighth Gold Medal of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games—I heard a great eruption.

It was an eruption of pride and joy. It wafted out from apartments and houses that left their windows open on that warm summer night. It came from the streets below, where people spilled on sidewalks hugging and hollering. It

came from cars that tooted their horns in solemn pride. It was in the air and all around that night.

Michael Phelps, born and raised in Rodgers Forge, MD, has gone where no Olympic athlete has gone before. His performance at this year's Olympic Games has placed him in the pantheon of the greatest athletes of all time. And he has accomplished all this with great grace and humility.

Throughout his exceptional swimming career, Phelps has always been quick to praise those who have helped him along the way. He shows special reverence to his mother Debbie, who, as a single mom juggling kids and multiple jobs, taught him the values of perseverance and courage in the face of obstacles.

As a young swimmer at the North Baltimore Aquatic Club, Phelps arrived day after day and gave his maximum effort. His work ethic is a testament to his strong, value-driven Baltimore upbringing. And he is living proof that if you can dream it, you can achieve it.

I am so proud to welcome Michael Phelps back to Baltimore. He could have gone on to any city. Instead, he came back to his family and to his community. He came back to the city where he first learned the values of hard work and perseverance.

So welcome home, Michael. And welcome home to all the Olympic athletes who served Maryland—and our country—so proud at this year's Olympic Games.

IDAHOANS SPEAK OUT ON HIGH ENERGY PRICES

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, in mid-June, I asked Idahoans to share with me how high energy prices are affecting their lives, and they responded by the hundreds. The stories, numbering well over 1,200, are heartbreaking and touching. To respect their efforts, I am submitting every e-mail sent to me through an address set up specifically for this purpose to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. This is not an issue that will be easily resolved, but it is one that deserves immediate and serious attention, and Idahoans deserve to be heard. Their stories not only detail their struggles to meet everyday expenses, but also have suggestions and recommendations as to what Congress can do now to tackle this problem and find solutions that last beyond today. I ask unanimous consent to have today's letters printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

The company I work for has just closed the doors to the center I have worked in for eight years and offered us jobs in a center over 50 miles away. Because I am three miles short of qualifying for a moving package, I (and 64 of my co-workers) will be forced to commute over 50 miles each way every day. We live in a rural area so public transportation is not an option. To get a new job would cut my wages more than half, so I must follow my job. I have three small chil-

dren (ages 2, 4 and 6), so I cannot stay away during the week and go home only on weekends.

I do not know what I will do if the cost of gas continues to rise. I, along with others that I know, could actually lose everything we have worked so hard to achieve. For the first time, I am really afraid of what is happening to my country.

Please do something now.

The rising price of gasoline is hurting nearly every family in America. We are tired of Congress doing nothing but bowing down to the environmentalists.

It is time for Congress to develop a program which allows the exploration of America's energy sources without materially affecting our environment. Congress should put our families first, ahead of the environmentalists!

YALON, *Pocatello*.

In response to your request on the impact of high gas prices, here is my story:

To help reduce the impact of higher fuel prices, I am taking personal responsibility of my own actions. It is actually really easy. I have made a habit of driving much less by riding a bike, walking, combining trips and cutting out unnecessary trips. The net impact has been less money spent at the pump (conservation) and I am in better health because of it.

As I ride around town, not a day goes by that I come across people letting their vehicle run idle in a parking lot while they do their errands. This includes sheriff's vehicles that idle outside the nearby office. This lack of overall awareness regarding high oil prices tells me we are not even close to changing the wasteful consumption habits Americans have adopted over many years. In the meantime, we learned nothing from the 70s. Since then, our politicians have failed to adopt a viable, self-reliant energy policy. Instead, we drive bigger vehicles and have become even more reliant on mid-east oil. The money that is being sent overseas is what allows the bad guys to fund the terrorist efforts. One in which we are fighting at the cost of over 4,000 deaths, many more permanent injuries and billions of borrowed taxpayer dollars. At this point, there is absolutely no end in sight for the war that most politicians will still not admit is all about the oil. After five years of false promises, we now have record oil prices and, what I believe is, over an eight trillion dollar deficit.

What this all has meant for me is, I woke up. I now realize how terribly screwed up things are in Washington. We are running out of oil! And the rest of the world wants the same standard of living we have! And the lack of resources and the environment cannot allow things to stay the same way, period!

In summary, your e-mail tells me you are not looking at the big picture. We cannot drill our way out of this. At best, it would only be a band-aid. I fear too many people still believe the same career politicians that are to blame for getting us into the mess we are in. They will say whatever it takes to fool voters that they have the right answers, even though history proves otherwise. What a shame.

Although I know I am fooling myself to think otherwise, I hope you have the guts to include this during your presentation to the Senate. Thanks for your time.

STEVE.

The one theme missing from so much of the concern over the rising price of energy in our country is searching/researching for alternatives! To continue to open up every potential oil source in our own country is so short-sighted since petroleum is a finite resource and does not solve the real problem.

Our leaders like you need to provide leadership to help our nation find through research and development alternative energy resources and stop this nonsense of giving the oil companies access to every square inch of natural landscape to extract oil. If our nation had had the guts to deal with the need to diversify our nation's appetite for petroleum energy back in the 1970s instead of letting the oil and auto lobbies keep us dependent on their services, we would not be in today's mess.

What concerns me is I hear you falling in step with the international oil corporations [and other groups] that feel threatened by the US being weaned off of oil products. [Dynamic leadership that leads us to alternative energy sources is most important.]

CATHERINE, *Pocatello*.

Per your request, I am sending information concerning my concerns about the high fuel prices.

The population [of my town] is less than 1,000 in town with less than 2,500 total in the entire county. The closest large city is Blackfoot with Idaho Falls being the next closest. Idaho Falls is larger, and it contains most of the trade support that we need. For example, pet supplies and food for us. It now means, thanks to the higher fuel prices, we can only travel to Idaho Falls once a month. It takes over \$120 to fuel my truck with diesel. With a round trip mileage of close to 150 miles and making only 16 miles-per-gallon, I am using close to $\frac{1}{2}$ a tank of fuel. I am retired and with fixed income. This affects me in a big way. My wife and I have a small vehicle for when driving is necessary within the local area. Still with both vehicles, we are spending close to \$200 to \$250 during a good month. These higher prices, in our area, means we must cut on other items, such as dinner out.

Arco currently is paying \$4.19.9 for the lowest grade of gasoline and \$4.89.9 for diesel. The prices north of Mackay are even higher; however, in Idaho Falls, unleaded regular is still under \$4 per gallon with diesel just under \$4.30. We in Arco cannot afford to travel to Idaho Falls or even Blackfoot for the lower prices due to the mileage roundtrip.

In my opinion, this economy is very deep in recession and very soon will be deep in a depression. The higher costs of energy, food and other necessities are definitely making it very difficult for us on fixed incomes to survive well. I can remember a portion of the depression, and if another occurs, the last one will be a "cake walk".

GUY, *Arco*.

Happy to see that you are starting to see the reality of the things that I have been sending e-mails about over the past year! I am glad that you are soliciting opinions from your constituents. Here are my thoughts (again):

1. It is the housing bubble bursting that has precipitated the collapse of the dollar. If you look at something stable like gold or silver, you will see that it takes the same amount of gold to buy a gallon of oil now as it has throughout recent years. The dollar has lost tremendous value due primarily from the Fed lowering interest rates and adding liquidity to save (bail-out) banks and Wall Street.

2. There is no truth in bank balance sheets. They cook the numbers constantly and no one seems to care that they misrepresent earnings in order to sustain stock price and the Dow. This in turn gets dumped onto "we the people" since it creates a false sense of stability. Although this also is not sustainable, it does provide these large institutions time to try to manipulate the markets and make (steal) money from unsuspecting in-

vestors. This has got to stop immediately. Loosing 401K value by purchasing stock that is going to get pounded when the truth of the sub-prime exposure eventually gets reckoned. Let us stop this now. Let the banks take their lumps and let the people have a chance to invest in properly valued institutions.

3. Recent discovery of programs like "Friends of Mozilla" where housing committee leaders get preferred rates from banks.

4. Environmental lobbies insisting that we do not go after much needed oil. So, if the oil companies were to fund a few lobbyists, could they really get their way and prevent us from drilling? Should we allow this to continue? Should we insist that it is essential to save our country and just get the oil? I am told that the reserves in Alaska and Florida alone hold enough oil that we would never need another drop of Saudi oil? What are we waiting for?

5. Looking at the farming incentives for growing corn to make ethanol is not financially sound. Spending more to farm and wasting oil in the process makes no sense. Stop the subsidies to farming corn. It really will not help and will effect (negatively) the inflation we are already experiencing. You say alternate energy. Let us get some tax incentives for R and D here in Idaho. Attract business and grow our economy by encouraging these types of businesses.

6. Initiatives to help grow American manufacturing. Giving away all of our manufacturing jobs due to our short sighted attitudes by American companies succeed will only lead to higher unemployment, lower wages and declining property values. Idaho for one should be doing everything they can to encourage growth. Reducing tax obligations for corporations and providing cash incentives for companies wanting to move here would certainly help. If wages were substantially higher then we could better afford the increases at the pump and elsewhere.

7. Someone ask some tough questions of the Fed and its policies. I mean reducing interest rates has only increased the problem. Actually fixed 30-year rates have increased due to lack of confidence. Restore confidence, get the rates of short term debt back to sure up the dollar. It is sad that the Fed is owned by the banks, allowing them to continue unchallenged by Congress is ridiculous.

R.

I am a sole provider of a family of four. I have been struggling to pay mortgage, insurance, food, electricity, and clothing bills as well as paying the high cost of gasoline for my vehicle to get to work. I feel as though I will need to get an additional job to cover the expenses. I was thinking about getting a loan to help with consolidating some bills; however, that is only a bandage to my problem. The problem is, that this year my employer only granted cost of living increases at a 1.5%. That does not even help since the true cost of living is far greater. I was grateful for the increase; however, it does not help feed my family. I now have to pay more than extra at the pump and now my vehicle needs an oil change and that is more costs added on to my transportation. I need the car for work in order to have money to take care of my family. There has to be a better solution to this problem.

JAN.

The point that must be stressed is that the economy of this nation and, particularly in the West and more particularly in wide open states like Idaho, is based on inexpensive personal modes of transportation. We have no other options to get from one place to another. (Neither horse and buggy nor any

form of mass transportation is available.) In my particular situation, my wife and I are both retired and attempting to live on a fixed retirement income. We both have health conditions which require substantial travel to specialists ranging from Idaho Falls on the north to Salt Lake City on the south. (You must realize that Malad's medical facilities, while greatly appreciated, are, relatively speaking, very limited. We have only two general practitioners and for more serious conditions are routinely referred to specialists in the larger populated areas, again, typically ranging anywhere from Idaho Falls to Salt Lake City.)

We have church commitments, requiring regular trips to Salt Lake. Also, we have seven families scattered around southern Idaho and northern Utah. We have had long continued intercommunicative relationships with these families. Now, with gas refills requiring anywhere from \$50 to \$100 and a still limited budget, obviously, something has to give. Windmills, solar panels and changing light bulbs will not cut it. Quality of life has to fall, and, in the case of required medical attention, can have serious consequences.

Additionally, we have two divorced daughters who have legal requirements for child custody visits. In one case, the intervening distance is over 300 miles; in the other case, over 100. Transporting children over these distances regularly and frequently, obviously, becomes extremely onerous!

Also, I have a son, living in Pocatello, who has numerous clients, and makes a substantial portion of his income, in and around the Salt Lake-Provo area. Needless to say, with \$100 gas tanks, it becomes increasingly difficult to keep these contacts economically viable, and has a serious impact on his ability to earn an income.

And, of course, this does not even take into account strictly pleasure trips to the mountains or to a lake for relaxation. Or to one of the nearby cities for entertainment opportunities not available in Malad. We basically become prisoners in our own home! Again, our economy, our way of life, is predicated on the ability to take advantage of assets, attractions and opportunities not available in our immediate locale, but readily available in the surrounding areas. Our ability to make a living and contribute to the economy, as well as enjoy what the economy has to offer us, in economic, social, charitable and pleasure situations, requires affordable transportation. We do not have that ability now and that is solely the result of shortsighted, faulty energy policy.

Finally, I truly resent the suggestion that this nation is too rich and must be brought down to size. Choking off energy will certainly bring us down, but unfortunately, not only will it result in economically disastrous conditions here in this country, but in the entire world also. I am still looking for some responsible leadership out of Washington to rectify this insane energy policy. I certainly hope you can provide it.

J. WESLEY.

This is a great idea! Thanks for the opportunity to share my thoughts on energy with you.

I made some changes in my life three years ago that have allowed me to reduce my gasoline costs substantially. I started my own business and I now work from home thanks to the wonder of the internet. I have been able to maintain my (still somewhat minimal) salary but have eliminated an 80-mile round-trip commute saving me hundreds of dollars a year in fuel costs.

We are also planning on augmenting our propane heating system with solar collectors. This will have a high upfront cost, but we are doing it to reduce our carbon emissions.

Here is my energy wish list for Congress:

Give larger and more consistent economic incentives for private and commercial solar and wind installation. Germany did this with solar and it is a run-away success.

Please support solar thermal for commercial electric production!! Idaho would be a great spot for solar thermal farms. We could be a leader!

Improve the nation's high tension power grid so power can be better distributed from new sources like solar thermal farms.

Give incentives to car-makers to bring the price down on electric plug-in cars. (See solar farms above for the power source.)

Stop the coal-bed methane production in Wyoming and Colorado. It is ruining the environment and endangering the pronghorn, sage grouse, air quality and water supplies. It is sad to watch this happening.

Please do not support nuclear energy. I lived through Chernobyl in Europe in 1986. It was not fun. No one has solved the nuclear waste problem and no one really wants the stuff stored for centuries in their backyard.

More light rail systems in Idaho. I would use it if it was available.

Thanks for listening—and for all your hard work in Congress!

LINDA, *Driggs.*

My daughter drives from Caldwell every day to her job as a paralegal in Boise. She is divorced, and her husband pays \$100 per month child support. She has one minor child at home and one child is 18 years old. The 18-year-old drives to Boise to clean houses despite a continuing terrible case of eczema. She married a young Marine in May. He is stationed in Okinawa as a Private First Class. My daughter is on a very limited budget and is having great difficulty continuing to buy food for her children and pay for her gasoline to continue working. I am trying to help, but am widowed and on a limited income. My husband was a World War II hero, whose honors included, among over 50 medals, two Purple Hearts and the Legion of Merit. We are trying to do our best to hang on but it gets harder every day. I paid \$50 to fill my gas tank yesterday at a discount station. If the situation continues to decline, I do not know how we will continue to be able to drive to work or the grocery store. As of now, I am only driving when necessary, and am limiting my spending in every way. Thank you for your concern.

SHARON.

TRIBUTE TO LAPRELE AND JUDGE LLOYD GEORGE

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a Nevada couple who have spent their lives contributing to the community, committing to their family, and serving as an example to us all.

Lloyd and LaPrele George have shared more than 50 years together. During that half century, Lloyd served as a fighter pilot in the U.S. Air Force, graduated from Brigham Young University, and earned his juris doctorate from the University of California at Berkley. Since 1974 and an appointment to the Federal Bankruptcy Court, he has been known fondly in Nevada as Judge George. He was appointed as a U.S. district court judge in 1984, served 5 years as the chief U.S. district judge, and assumed senior judge status in 1997.

I am reminded of Judge George every time I go to my southern Nevada of-

fice, as the newest Federal building in Las Vegas proudly bears his name. Judge George is a fixture in the Nevada legal community, but his reputation extends beyond the walls of his courthouse and beyond the borders of the United States. He has lectured on legal topics nationally and internationally and often serves as an ambassador, showing foreign dignitaries around the courthouse and introducing them to southern Nevada.

While his name may be known by jurists around the world, his own world has always revolved around his wife LaPrele, their 4 children, and 13 grandchildren. In November, Opportunity Village, one of the most respected local organizations in Las Vegas, will honor the George Family with the "Order of the Village." The Georges will be recognized for their tireless advocacy on behalf of people with intellectual disabilities.

Lloyd and LaPrele's oldest son Doug sparked their involvement in the special needs community. At a time when it was expected that children with intellectual disabilities would be sent to institutions, the Georges instead embraced their son and became champions for those with intellectual disabilities and an inspiration for their families. They were involved in the early days of the Clark County Association of Retarded Children, even cosigning the mortgage on the group's first building. Over time, it evolved into Opportunity Village, Nevada's largest private, not-for-profit community rehabilitation program. Serving more than 3,000 people a year, Opportunity Village offers Nevadans, like Doug George, a chance to earn a paycheck and feel a sense of independence.

The Georges have shined the light of their service on southern Nevada for many years. We have been blessed by their heartfelt involvement and loving leadership. Judge George and LaPrele, thank you for your commitment to your family and to our community. There is hope and opportunity for many Nevadans because of you. May God continue to bless you and your family.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO FALLEN WILDLAND FIREFIGHTERS

• Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I have a favorite quote about firefighters: "All men are created equal, then a few become firemen."

Firefighters are indeed a rare breed—selfless and brave. It is a tragedy when even one is lost. On September 1, Montana and America lost not one but three firefighters in an airplane crash as they rushed to quell the flames of a fire in California. Gene Wahlstrom, Greg Gonsioroski, and Zachary VanderGriend may be gone from this Earth, but they will never be forgotten. Their sacrifice and unwavering dedica-

tion to the lives of others stand as an example for all Americans. These brave men were based in Missoula, MT, and though they hailed from Washington and Utah in addition to the Big Sky State, I am proud to call them all Montanans.

Gene Wahlstrom began his 35-year flying career as a crop duster and rose to the position of chief pilot for Neptune Aviation. Gene was a Vietnam veteran and a natural leader and mentor. Folks who knew Gene say he was a kind, genuine, accomplished, and loyal friend.

Most folks who knew Greg Gonsioroski just called him "Gonzo." He began his career as an airplane mechanic but decided to take to the skies himself. Greg was a native of Baker, MT. A family man first, father to Gabriel, Grady, and Gracelyn, and doting husband to Kim, he will be remembered as a gentle giant and a loving and patient father, husband, and friend.

Zachary VanderGriend was a new employee with Neptune Aviation but not new to flying—he had dreamed of being a pilot since he was 2 years old. Zachary got his pilot's license when he was 17 and spent much of his time in volunteer programs such as the Young Eagles. As noted in his eulogy, Zachary was a devoted Christian who loved to fly "because it was there he felt closest to God."

I believe service is one of the most honorable things a person can do. Whether it is service to ones community, State, or country, service is the most noble of all human endeavors.

In Montana and indeed across much of the West, fires are an almost constant threat. It is the price we pay for living in one of the most beautiful places on earth. So every year we place our belongings, our homes and our lives in the hands of firefighters—too often without a second thought.

The loss of Gene, Greg, and Zachary gives us pause. As a Montanan and an American, I feel tremendous sadness in their passing but also tremendous gratitude for the time we were graced with their presence.●

REMEMBERING NATHAN WEXLER

• Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, the State of Delaware lost one of its most remarkable citizens on September 10, with the passing of Nathan Wexler at the age of 97.

I first met Nate many years ago during one of my early campaigns, when he showed up in my campaign headquarters offering to volunteer. From that day forward, though he had retired from his dry cleaning business and was at an age when most folks are ready to slow down, Nate was one of our most active volunteers.

A talented artist, Nate began a second career as a professional sign painter. Indeed, one of the staples of our campaign's offices was a large sign that he painted many years ago. I have had several campaigns, and several