

I am honored to know her and to have worked with her. I would like to thank Senator DOLE for her contributions to the Senate and to the country we both love. I wish her and her family the best in all of their future endeavors.

JOHN E. SUNUNU

Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I wish to join my fellow Senators to honor a colleague and a friend, Senator JOHN E. SUNUNU, who is departing the Senate at the close of this Congress. I have enjoyed working with Senator SUNUNU over the years—first in the House of Representatives and later in the Senate.

While in the Senate, I have had the great fortune of serving with JOHN on the Senate Finance Committee. He is a revered advocate of fiscal discipline, personal responsibility, and free markets. The two of us have stood together on numerous issues—most notably tax—and I have always believed that we could accomplish any goal because I had his voice of conviction and intellect by my side.

Representing New Hampshire, Senator SUNUNU has proven to all Granite Staters that he will fight for the simple motto that reads on their State license plate: Live Free or Die. Whether the item of the day was social security, trade, or any other topical issue, including the original intent of the Constitution, Senator SUNUNU has proven that he is up for any debate.

The U.S. Senate will not be the same without Senator JOHN SUNUNU. In a time when many politicians try to increase the role of government in American life, Senator JOHN SUNUNU has always bet on the American people rather than government. I will miss JOHN SUNUNU.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, four of our most valuable Senators will not return next year and we will miss them.

ELIZABETH DOLE

ELIZABETH DOLE began her career in public service at about the same time I did. We were both in the Nixon White House in 1969, and since then I have enjoyed following and watching and occasionally bumping into her remarkable career. She began that career at a time when women, even if they graduated from Harvard Law School as she did, had very few options. ELIZABETH made her options—in the Cabinet, heading the American Red Cross and pioneering in a Presidential race in 1999. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with her, as well as knowing even better Bob Dole during these last 6 years. She truly is one of America's most admired women.

GORDON SMITH

GORDON SMITH is the most eloquent among us Senators. Every Republican Senator would say that, and any Democrat who had heard him would agree. He has a quiet way, an intelligence and a way of speaking that commands attention and respect. He has his feet

firmly planted on the ground in Pendleton, OR. He understands the private sector. He has been courageous in his willingness to support and chide and criticize his party when needed. He will be sorely missed.

JOHN SUNUNU

I met JOHN SUNUNU when he was a college student and his father and I were Governors of our respective States. He arrives and leaves as the youngest member of the Senate. But, in our caucus, his voice is one of the voices most carefully listened to. His intelligence, his philosophical integrity and his persistence have made him a most valuable player in our Republican Conference. He has a bright career ahead of him.

TED STEVENS

I have often thought that I should write a book called "some things you don't know about the people I work with." Someday I will. And I will start with TED STEVENS, who flew the first cargo plane into Peking, as it was then called, at the end of World War II. This was a dangerous, bold mission. It helps to explain the life of this remarkable man who helped Alaska become a State and then has defended and supported it in the Senate for 40 years. With the departures of TED STEVENS and two other Senators of whom I have already spoken—PETE DOMENICI and JOHN WARNER—the Senate loses more than 100 years of service. More than that, this country loses three men whose view of America was rooted in the last years of World War II and the remarkable ascendancy of our country since then. Looking around the Senate, it will be difficult to find many among those of us who remain with the breadth of vision and old-fashioned patriotism that these men have contributed.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

CAPTAIN ROBERT YLLESCAS

Mr. HAGEL. Mr. President, I wish to express my sympathy over the loss of U.S. Army captain Robert Yllescas. Captain Yllescas, a native Guatemalan and graduate of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, died on December 1 from injuries he sustained from an improvised explosive device in the mountains of Afghanistan on October 28. He was 31 years old.

After spending the first 18 years of his life in Guatemala, Captain Yllescas moved to Nebraska, where he enrolled in the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and joined the ROTC. He married his wife Dena in her hometown of Osceola, NE. A graduate of Army Ranger school, Captain Yllescas' service included two tours of duty in Iraq and one in Afghanistan, where he proved to be an exemplary leader. As the commander of B Troop, 6-4 Cavalry of the 3rd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, he led 90 U.S. and 200 Afghan soldiers in Nuristan province. He was awarded the Purple Heart by President Bush on November 10.

All of Nebraska is proud of Captain Yllescas' service to our country, as

well as the thousands of brave men and women serving in the U.S. Armed Forces.

Captain Yllescas is remembered as a devoted husband, father, and son. In addition to his wife Dena, he is survived by his daughters, Julia, 7, and Eva, 10 months; and parents Otto and Barb.

I ask my colleagues to join me and all Americans in honoring U.S. Army CPT Robert Yllescas.

67TH ANNIVERSARY OF PEARL HARBOR

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, yesterday, December 7, 2008, was the 67th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor in which more than 2,400 courageous sailors, soldiers, and marines died. To those in Hawaii who, like me, witnessed the attack, the events of 67 years ago have a deep personal significance. I will never forget the courage and commitment of the soldiers, sailors, and ordinary men and women who did not hesitate to defend our Nation despite the enormous personal risk. For all Americans, young and old, it is important to remember that out of this dark hour arose the courage and strength of a unified Nation. I honor the memories of all the survivors of the attack as well as the fallen heroes who fought to defend our Nation's principles of democracy and freedom that day.

This year, with so many of our troops serving overseas, I would also like recognize our armed services families by honoring the sacrifices of those who lost loved ones during the attack on Pearl Harbor. Our Nation owes these family members a debt of gratitude for their strength and perseverance during such a grievous time. I want to thank all the members of our armed forces—those that served in World War II, all those that have served since, and those who still serve today. Your daily sacrifices protect and strengthen our country and allow us to enjoy the freedoms symbolic of the United States. Your courageous and dedicated efforts humble me, and may God bless you and your families as together we remember Pearl Harbor.

TRIBUTE TO LINDA LE

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the outstanding service Linda Le provided to the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship over the past 4 years. Linda is a dedicated individual whose penchant for critical insights and creative solutions will be sorely missed.

Linda first joined the Senate Small Business Committee staff in 2004 as a staff assistant. She had previously gained invaluable experience on financial matters during her career at Fidelity Investments. Through hard work and determination here in the Senate, Linda rose through the ranks, first as a research analyst and finally as a professional staff member. Over the years,

I have come to rely on her knowledge and expertise in the areas of small business lending, banking, and women's business issues. She is a thoughtful member of the Committee's staff who could be relied upon for her ideas on how to strengthen legislation to benefit our Nation's small business owners. Just this year, Linda played a pivotal role in helping me develop legislation to alleviate the small business credit crunch and provide oversight over small business lenders. When Congress reconvenes next year, I will push to see that the Small Business Lending Oversight and Program Performance Improvement Act and the 10 Steps for a Main Street Economic Recovery Act are enacted into law.

The consummate professional, Linda was always well prepared for committee hearings, markups and roundtables. She consistently provided me with detailed materials that clearly explained complex situations and offered proactive and comprehensive solutions to problems regarding small business lending, access to credit, and women's business concerns. Linda's ability to build and maintain relationships with constituents, issue experts, and staff from other Members' offices has served me and the committee well. In all her years on the Small Business Committee, Linda has been a passionate advocate for small businesses and their owners. Her eagerness to make a difference in people's lives is nothing short of commendable.

After her tenure here in Washington, Linda is leaving the Senate to pursue a cause dear to her heart. Soon, she will be heading to Iraq to work as a business development specialist with one of the State Department's provincial reconstruction teams, or PRTs. PRTs are vital to our mission in Iraq, as they are made up of experts who advise the U.S. military and local Iraqi government on a wide array of issues, including economic and business development. Linda's work with the PRT will continue her pursuit of serving others, and will help win the hearts and minds of Iraqis in need of this vital aid.

Linda Le is a person of remarkable strength and selflessness. And to make her story all the more compelling, her husband Hung, a communications officer in the U.S. Army National Guard, recently deployed to Afghanistan to serve our country in the war on terror. Clearly, the word "service" has a profound meaning in Linda's household. I speak for my entire staff when I say we will keep Linda and her husband in our thoughts and prayers during their time overseas, and we wish Linda safe travels and much success in her new and incredible endeavor.

While I am sad to see Linda leave, I am excited for her bright future. She has used her talents to the fullest extent here in the Senate, and I am confident that she will continue to excel in everything she does. Thank you, Linda, for your dedicated service to your country, and best wishes as you begin

an extraordinary new chapter in your life.

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. While energy prices have dropped in recent weeks, the concerns expressed remain very relevant. To respect the efforts of those who took the opportunity to share their thoughts, 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:

Thank you for listening to us. Please increase domestic oil production now. If it takes 10 years before we see the oil, then do it for the children. Also, please expand nuclear energy research and production.

VIRGINIA, *Rexburg.*

The price of gasoline has impacted our family budget. How much? I do not know, the price of gasoline continues to rise so quickly it is hard to see the whole impact. A few of the things we need to do are the following: More R&D dollars spent by the government for alternate energy sources; More nuclear plants are need across the nation; More plants to process the oil into gasoline are needed; More taxes on the oil companies, too.

KEVIN, *Rupert.*

Yes, we would like to see us drilling for fuel in our own country, exploring all options of new sources and conservation. It is hypocritical to not drill for our own fuel because of the environment and then buy from other (not so friendly!!) countries. We are a small business. We are working on a lower profit margin due to the high prices. We are trying to keep from raising our prices for as long as we can. We are taking steps to minimize our driving. That only goes so far. We support your idea Senator Crapo. Thank you for not signing on to that energy/environment bill.

SANDRA.

What a bunch of nonsense this is when America supports the Middle East so they can build indoor ski areas, palm tree islands out of sand for the mega-wealthy in the ocean and cut off the heads of Christians and Americans on television while we have enough gas and oil for all of America and more right under our noses.

What are you, our representatives, thinking? You are all out of control—you speak but you do not act, you type great things, ask for money to support your habit of power

seeking at the top, being in the limelight, etc. and you continue to let American go further down in the eyes of the world—not to mention being abhorred by American citizens.

There is no respect for the office of the President, whom the press refer to as "Mr. Bush or just Bush" not President Bush.

You want our story—we are older American citizens, 63 and 65 years of age. We were born in World War II. We lived through Korea. We hid under our desks and against walls in elementary school in fear of the bomb which now our grandchildren have to fear. We lost our husbands, brothers and friends for nothing in Vietnam for a corrupt President's wife to continue to have her trucking companies pay huge dividends into their Texas ranch and still cannot say for sure just who killed President Kennedy. Desert Storm was a joke—what did we accomplish there—in and out and did not finish the job. 911 wasn't funny but we still cannot decide how to handle the "bad boys" that blew up our world that horrible day. We are being told that it is just another day in the life of people elsewhere—are we supposed to accept that and just move on?

And now "The Changeling" wants to disarm Americans and create a global government—look out for your job—it may be gone sooner than you think. The Program People are winning. We are now disrespected around the world.

Now we refuse to win in America for real tax-paying Americans, with citizenship, that have earned the American dream and are courting the illegal people in the country while spitting in my face. My husband just turned 66 and 10 months. Whoopee! He may now have a "reduced" amount of Social Security because he needs it now—not 6 years from now when it may not even be available. Here's the breakdown:

The Social Security he paid into for 48 years will give him approximately \$1650 dollars a month (Rent/Utilities/Insurance/Gas/Food/Medical—probably not enough);

The Medicare system which he also paid into for years charges him \$93.10 a month to continue to be a part of that system he should have earned by now and is broken at best;

A Medicare Supplement, which you have to have to get decent medical care, costs \$125+ a month added to the \$93.10.

A Prescription Supplement runs another \$25+ dollars added to the \$93.10 and the \$125 and we still use \$4.00 WalMart for generics when possible;

And, we still have no dental, no vision, no disability, no long term care and no respect as doctors continue to refuse new patients on Medicare only.

And don't tell us that Socialized Medicine is any better—have a brain tumor in Canada or France or Denmark and wait 6-9 months for the MRI that has to be done in the coffin because you, my friend, died of brain cancer that was operable 6-9 months ago.

We have no debt other than our house and one small car payment. We now have to plan one day a week for errands. We calculate the difference between buying groceries at the closer grocery store with the cost of gas versus the savings we might get at the super WalMart. We chose a new doctor closer to the house. We do not go to the dentist twice a year for cleaning and preventative any more. We have not seen the eye doctor in over a year and a half—the old glasses will have to do for a while more.

And we still have a business in home and work 40+ hours a week so the government can take back some of the Medicare money they spent on doctor visits and tax 85 percent of the Social Security we earned.

What a bunch of nonsense, Mr. Crapo! You people need to get a grip and start acting