

the Democrats, but they want the United States to fail in every way, it seems!

Now, a little more about my wife and I. We are both disabled after working hard all our lives and had a good income till our disabilities set in. She went down first, and I followed a few years later. God put us together for a reason, I have to believe. It must be so we could lean on each other. But needless to say we live on a small, fixed income and, eight years ago, my wife's mother had to come and live with us because she has Alzheimer's Disease. We got along OK, I guess, till the gas prices shot up.

I remember 1973 and 1981. I know the prices go up and never come back down to the point they were, even long after the "crisis" is over. In ten or so years, it is possible we could be self-sufficient as far as petroleum and natural gas go. If we drill everywhere we can, build refineries to process the crude, in 10-12 years, we could have gas prices back to something where we could afford to eat.

Because it is not just the gas prices, it is everything that has to be trucked or shipped by air. Airlines are going belly up, we cannot afford to eat food that is good for us so we have to go to a high starch, low protein diet which will kill us quicker. The long term solution is other means and other types of fuel. But in the short term, the NOW term, we need to drill and I'll even say, having lived in Alaska for a few years, if people knew how vast the 49th state is, they would say "Go right ahead, drill!" Because it would not hurt any animals, the pipeline could hook right up to the one that already runs from Prudhoe Bay to Valdez. It is simple really, but Congress has always found a way to make it hard. Our whole government seems to be "out of touch" with its citizens' needs.

Did you know that ANWR is 700 miles from the nearest tree? There is nothing there! But oil if we drill it. And we wouldn't have to drill there if we drilled off shore, in the Dakotas and Montana, used coal-to-oil technology. The ocean floor pollutes more in seepage than drilling ever could because we have "green" technology, and they do not shoot up toward the skies anymore like the old black and white movies always show it.

But these gas prices just kill people like my wife and others in our situation. We get our fair share every month on the third because we both started working when we were teenagers (I was told this helped with the money part), and my wife's mother is 71 and worked her whole life. But we are still a family of three with kids who are grown, and six wonderful grandchildren who we like to make sure their birthdays and Christmases are filled with gifts from us that cost money which we do not have. If I could afford a Prius, I'd buy one! (maybe). But the fact is I have a '96 Plymouth Voyager and that has to last me the rest of my life, hopefully.

So I need lower gas prices and, as I ramble on here (you invited me to—LOL), I know the solution and so do most of the Republicans and even some Democrats, except they won't let us drill. It seems that the parties have to follow like lemmings and they just cannot think for themselves.

Other countries are drilling OUR oil right off our coasts! They are, and I'll tell you how. They drill down and then make a 60-90 degree turn and go under our waters and even under our land and are going to get our oil while leasing waters from Cuba! This, sir, makes me sick!!! If I were in charge, I'd drill right through a polar bear's skull, if I had to, to get at the oil that we have more of than Saudi Arabia! We do! OK. Not really.

But the polar bear was put on the endangered species list, when they have grown six-fold in number (where's the sense in that?). There are five, six times as many polar bears now than there were 255 years ago, and NOW

they decide to put them on the endangered species list? And merely to keep us from drilling in Alaska. I'll close by saying this: Please try to persuade all Republicans and any Democrats you know that may come over to the common sense side of it all and allow us to drill! That is the only way we will be energy self-sufficient in the next ten years, unless Al Gore is going to buy me an electric minivan.

And just a quick note: I do not know if I believe global warming exists, but even more, I am pretty sure that, if it does indeed exist, man is not responsible for it. I have personally talked to scientists and saw an interview on the "Glenn Beck" program with the founder of "The Weather Channel" and he said that global warming or climate change is the biggest hoax ever pulled on the American people and the world! It is merely a cycle the earth goes through and if you look back to about 60-70 years ago, you'd see the same cycles and temperatures and storms, etc.

OK, Senator, I'm done. I hope you find time to personally read this, because you are one of the good ones who seems to be in touch with the people's needs, along with the country's needs. You have always done a good job and, for the most part, I like the way you vote.

Thank you,

RICHARD and KELLEY.

Now you are talking, Senator. . . . If more Senators and Congress Representatives started asking the people to share their thoughts, ideas, and struggles that we are all being put through with this energy crisis, we could believe that government really had our interest at heart, instead of just their own. I have done a lot of research in past months, and find it hard to understand with all the oil we have here in our own country, and we know we have it. Why do we go elsewhere for it and, literally, held ransom while someone else profits?

And on another issue of being held hostage for energy, are all these utility companies. We always hear on the news, how much profit they made, and then how much more it is going to cost us, "We the People," for its use, and then they have the gall to announce their big corporate raises. If we have to suffer the higher costs, then they should also, by waiving their raises until things are under control again. That is my thought on this, as well as many others.

We are a family of four seniors on fixed incomes, all with health issues. My mom is 85, bedridden. And my brother-in-law is a three-time cancer survivor, a shell of a man. He served two terms in Vietnam in the midst of Agent Orange and cannot even get any veteran's compensation. His wife is his caregiver, and she suffers horribly from fibromyalgia. I'm a widow and a caregiver for my mom, who is also now a widow. We have had to come together in order to survive. So we have to watch carefully every penny we spend. We live 15 miles out of town, and have to watch how many trips we take into town so as not to waste gas. We have cut back to using one car, and try to correlate our doctor visits and trips to the pharmacy. And it still costs as much or more than it did using two cars before the price gouging.

I am a lot more in tune to what is going on in this country and how we are being treated by our own government. It is really criminal to say the least. We, who have worked our whole life paying into our system and serving our country in loyalty, and with our lives, we deserve to be treated with far more respect than we get. Senator, we know that this system is working hard to take our sovereignty from us. We are not stupid people;

we see and read beyond what the system wants us to know. Please be one of those who are on the side of people, for our freedom of Constitutional rights.

Long live the United States of America, where our flag flies with pride, and blood has been shed in her honor.

Respectfully,

ANDREA.

Senator Crapo,

I manage an insurance agency with twenty independent salespeople at Farm Bureau Insurance. I could give you quite a few stories, but the one I am most familiar with is my son that works for us. He is 35 years old and has triplets that are two-and-one-half years old. He also has an eleven-year-old and a nine-year-old, so he has a full house. His wife is obviously now a stay-at-home mom, but the energy crunch along with grocery inflation is absolutely devastating. He coaches his Little League baseball traveling team and so between his sales career, baseball, and running kids all over, his gas bill alone is between \$600 and \$700 per month. With the triplet children, the vehicle has to be a large, used SUV. Couple that with his pick-up, and the gas mileage is not the greatest! The larger vehicles, however, are a necessity. This is just the icing on the cake when you also consider the larger house that they now live in with increased utility costs plus the inflated cost of groceries, especially milk. It is time that we start drilling and looking for an effective domestic energy policy and quit outsourcing on energy to foreign soil. We sincerely hope that Congress does something and soon, and that they develop a long term comprehensive policy to prevent future similar crises.

RON.

To the powers that be:

I am a handicapped woman existing on my Social Security and let me tell you, it only goes so far. I live outside of town about six miles and granted, that is not a great distance, but it adds up very fast. As you know, Social Security really is not enough to live on, and now I am having to add in outrageously high fuel prices for my furnace and car.

We live in the greatest nation, the richest nation and still we are dependent on foreign fuel to meet our needs. Why is that? We have the capacity to be so much more independent and yet, the consumer, me, pays out and pays out until there is nothing left. Will I be able to save any money to pay for my burial? No, not at the rate things are going. It is a sad commentary on the government when those who have not have to take care of those that have. . . . sad, indeed.

It is time for government to be "of the people" once again, and not out for their own individual gain.

CINDY.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

THILMANY PAPERS

- Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I want to take a quick moment to congratulate Thilmay Papers of Kaukauna, WI, on their 125th year anniversary. From humble beginnings with 18 employees, it has grown to a family of 1,000 employees today. This trusted paper manufacturer, founded on the banks of the Fox River 125 years ago, continues to provide specialty papers with a customer service record unmatched in eastern Wisconsin.

One of the names most closely associated with the progress of Kaukauna is Oscar Thilmany. A German immigrant who arrived in the United States in 1866, he tried his hand at a variety of occupations, going from a journalist for a New York newspaper to a company involved in wood preserving.

In Thilmany Pulp and Paper Company, Mr. Thilmany found his calling. With that calling came one of the most successful paper companies in all of Wisconsin today. I congratulate Thilmany Papers on their 125th anniversary and wish them much success in the years ahead.●

120 YEAR PARTNERSHIP

• Mr. SUNUNU. Mr. President, today I recognize the 120th anniversary of State veterans' homes, SVHs.

Following the Civil War, a large number of newly disabled veterans struggled to earn a living as they adjusted back to civilian life. While the Federal Government operated national homes for qualifying Union volunteer soldiers, the total number of veterans in need of care was overwhelming.

In order to meet this need, a number of States independently opened SVHs to care for those injured in service to their country. The first such home opened in Rocky Hill, CT, in 1864.

In August 1888, aware it had a responsibility to assist those who had so diligently and honorably served their country, Congress pledged Federal funding to assist with the operation of existing and future SVHs. This original \$250,000 appropriation provided States with \$100 per eligible veteran enrolled in an SVH to assist in providing needed support to those who could no longer care for themselves.

Over time, as the number of veterans requiring care increased, the Federal Government responded by providing the States with added assistance. With the establishment of the Veterans' Administration, VA, in 1930, SVHs were expanded to include three levels of care, and in 1960, Congress established a per diem payment system to replace the annual appropriation and better reflect the funding needs of the Nation's SVHs. Finally, in 1964, Congress initiated the State Home Construction Grant Program, which provided further Federal assistance and created the opportunity for a dramatic increase in the quantity and quality of SVHs.

During this time, the National Association of State Veterans Homes, NASVH, was founded to promote legislation at the national level and increase communication among the Nation's SVHs. In partnership with the VA, the NASVH continues to advocate in support of the country's needy veterans and has been instrumental in increasing per diem and other funding rates.

Today, 120 years since the original appropriation, this State and Federal partnership has flourished. Currently, SVHs serve as one of the country's

largest long-term care providers—offering approximately 30,000 total beds at more than 130 SVHs nationwide. In a typical year, State veterans homes will furnish nearly 7 million days of nursing home care and about 1.5 million days of domiciliary care.

In New Hampshire, veterans receive the highest quality of care under the watchful eye of Commandant Barry Conway and his extremely capable staff in Tilton. It is because of these dedicated men and women in New Hampshire and around the country that our elder veteran community receives the care they have earned and deserve.●

RECOGNIZING AMBER MULDER

• Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Amber Mulder, an intern in my Sioux Falls, SD, office, for all of the hard work she has done for me, my staff, and the State of South Dakota over the past several months.

Amber is a graduate of Western Christian High School in Hull, IA. Currently she is attending Hamline University School of Law. Amber is a hard worker who has been dedicated to getting the most out of her internship experience.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Amber for all of the fine work she has done and wish her continued success in the years to come.●

RECOGNIZING BETSY POPPENS

• Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Betsy Poppens, an intern in my Sioux Falls, SD, office, for all of the hard work she has done for me, my staff, and the State of South Dakota over the past several months.

Betsy is a graduate of Marion High School in Marion, SD. Currently she is attending Northwestern College, where she is majoring in public relations. She is a hard worker who has been dedicated to getting the most out of her internship experience.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Betsy for all of the fine work she has done and wish her continued success in the years to come.●

125TH ANNIVERSARY OF ALPENA, SOUTH DAKOTA

• Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Alpena, SD. The town of Alpena commemorated its 125th anniversary of its founding with celebrations June 20-22, 2008.

Located in Jerauld County, Alpena was founded in 1883 and was named after the hometown of founder and railroad superintendent C.H. Prior. Since its beginning 125 years ago, the community of Alpena has continued to serve as a strong example of South Dakota values and traditions.

I would like to offer my congratulations to the citizens of Alpena on this

milestone anniversary and wish them continued prosperity in the years to come.●

125TH ANNIVERSARY OF ARTESIAN, SOUTH DAKOTA

• Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Artesian, SD. The town of Artesian commemorated its 125th anniversary of its founding with celebrations July 4-6, 2008.

Located in Sanborn County, Artesian was founded in 1883 and was named after the abundance of flowing wells in the area, known as artesian wells.

Since its beginning 125 years ago, the community of Artesian has continued to serve as a strong example of South Dakota values and traditions.

I would like to offer my congratulations to the citizens of Artesian on this milestone anniversary and wish them continued prosperity in the years to come.●

125TH ANNIVERSARY OF BRUCE, SOUTH DAKOTA

• Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Bruce, SD. The town of Bruce will commemorate its 125th anniversary of its founding with celebrations July 24-27, 2008.

Located in Brookings County, Bruce was founded in 1883 and was named after statesman B.K. Bruce, who was the first African American to serve a full term in the United States Senate. Since its beginning 125 years ago, the community of Bruce has continued to serve as a strong example of South Dakota values and traditions.

I would like to offer my congratulations to the citizens of Bruce on this milestone anniversary and wish them continued prosperity in the years to come.●

125TH ANNIVERSARY OF CENTERVILLE, SOUTH DAKOTA

• Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Centerville, SD. The town of Centerville will commemorate the 125th anniversary of its founding with celebrations July 3-6, 2008.

Located in Turner County, Centerville was founded in 1883. It earned its name because of its location halfway between Yankton and Sioux Falls, and midway between Parker and Vermillion.

Since its beginning 125 years ago, the community of Centerville has continued to serve as a strong example of South Dakota values and traditions.

I would like to offer my congratulations to the citizens of Centerville on this milestone anniversary and wish them continued prosperity in the years to come.●