

I ride my bike. Gas prices for that are \$0, pollution is minimal, impact to the roads minimal, and most of all, it is great for my health.

MIKE, Boise.

Dear Senator Crapo: I now ride a bicycle to deal with the high cost of gasoline. You may be surprised to know that bicycles are about 97% efficient in converting energy to motion. Of course, there are times of the year when this is not practical (like during the winter), so I would make the following recommendation.

We need more fuel-efficient motor vehicles, and one way to do that would be to pass legislation limiting the maximum weight of new motor vehicles. The automotive industry could make significant improvements in motor vehicle fuel efficiency if they would all move to lower mass designs. For this, they need a level playing field that also resets safety standards to consider a lower maximum vehicle weight. To achieve a lower vehicle weight, industry would have to employ new or alternative materials. It is not just about the engines.

PAUL.

Three of us work for Scentsy Candles in Meridian, which is 26 miles one way. We drive two cars; I get off at 3 pm, and the others get off at 5:30 pm. One car spends 42.00 a week, and the other car spends 48.25 a week. You do the math. When does it stop . . .

DOUGLAS, CHRISTINE AND COLLEEN, Emmett.

The energy prices are outrageous! The only people that it is not affecting are the rich and famous! We are in the process of building a new home . . . and did you know that Idaho does not have any kind of programs that will help a homebuilder with solar panels or windmills. If you are so worried about energy, why not bring some programs that will help people with these kinds of things. In looking at the costs of these things, there is not one program out there that will help the individuals who are barely making it. We would love to go solar and wind, but on top of all the other high costs, there's no way we can afford it. Too bad you aren't as worried as you say you are, or we in Idaho would already have these kinds of programs in effect! All we do is save and help the lazy people who would rather take and take from the government. There are no programs to help the ones that really need it and wouldn't use the system, over and over again.

Just think—if we could afford the extra 10–30k for solar panels and all that is needed to make solar energy, we could be selling power back to Avista! But the rich and famous politicians do not have to worry about their energy bills!

Eight years ago, I made a statement of “when Bush is done with this country, no one will be able to afford gas.” Well, it is almost that time! I sure hit that one right on the money! We need to get our troops out of Iraq, also. If we had all the money that was being spent on a war we can't win (what are we suppose to win anyway?) The government could have already given every citizen in the United States a million dollars to spend any way they wanted to and still have money left! But we have to be killing people and letting our soldiers die, too. When they get injured, we do not do anything for them. How sad is our country, anyway. We shouldn't be fighting with anyone!

DENISE.

I have a small sales company that sells new construction hardware for the residential market. This territory is for Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. The amount of new construction is way off from two years

ago and, coupled with gasoline costing over \$4 a gallon, it becomes almost impossible to service the accounts profitably.

What do we do to counteract the negative forces? We drive 4-cylinder cars that get good mileage, drive less, make more phone calls and hope for improvement in the construction sector.

What do we believe would help the current squeeze by high gasoline prices? Encourage more development of the Bakken Oil Formation which stretches across North Dakota, Montana, and part of Saskatchewan. This oil field has 3.65 billion barrels of light sweet crude according to the USGS and that is not counting reserves. What to do with it? Threaten the oil companies with the possibility of taking away the extra tax credits afforded them unless they expedite refinery capacity (Does not matter how much crude without the refining capacity), and give a very concerted effort to begin major extraction from this large pool of oil. This oil field makes a lot more sense than drilling in ANWR when considering the location and amount of crude available. Nuclear? You bet. With today's technology, it makes extreme sense to use nuclear power. The biggest problem of course is waste disposal. How many billions of taxpayer dollars have been spent on Yucca Mountain? Tell the state of Nevada that the facility is the property of the U.S. government and that it will use it according to the best interests of the U.S. citizens.

Does Joe Citizen think that we have a big problem with energy right now? You bet. Would the above ideas help? I think so. Can it be done? If the U.S. could put a man on the moon almost 40 years ago and that was not under emergency conditions, why not? A lot of people need to sit down in Washington D.C. and say “Hey we have a real problem here, let's fix it”. If NASA can put a man on the moon why can't the whole U.S. fix the energy problem?

Regards,

GARY, Nampa.

Honorable Mike Crapo: Our youth group used to spend our summers enjoying the absolutely fabulous Idaho backcountry. We used to hike, fish, swim in all the scenic Idaho lakes and rivers. Congress has spent a lot of effort to make sure that these pristine areas are set aside for future generations to enjoy. I applaud their efforts to maintain a balance between energy exploration and the ability to witness the beauties of nature. However, due to the continuing increases in fuel costs, those days of exploring these backcountry wonders is quickly becoming only a shadow. Our youth group is no longer able to afford these backcountry trips due to the fuel expense. With a continued increase in gas cost, it will be a wonder if soon anyone will be able to make the excursion.

I would fully support the limited and non-intrusive exploration and exploitation of the vast oil, gas and coal resources our country has been blessed with to maintain the life style that past generations have enjoyed. Open ANWR and our coastlines to these proven reserves. I believe we have the technology to safely capture all the fossil fuel reserves that are within our ability to acquire. It is much better for a good steward like the USA to retrieve these resources in a safer way rather than other countries such as China and India that have been notorious for abandoning sound pollution principles. Nuclear power has a proven track record of safe power production and I would implore the Senate to do everything in their power to open the door to the next generation of even safer nuclear power production and finally opening up the single repository for our spent fuel at Yucca Mountain. Our society will be much better off and our future gen-

erations will then be able to continue to witness marvels of nature as we blend environmental and sane land use policies.

I consider myself a conservationist and have always ridden my bike to work, but removing the wonders of nature from my life due to gas cost is more than I can bear.

JAMES, Boise.

RETIREMENT OF GENERAL MICHAEL MOSELEY

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to say a few words about the retirement of GEN T. Michael Moseley.

This morning at Bolling Air Force Base, the Air Force said farewell to its 18th Chief of Staff. Buzz Moseley faced a staggering array of challenges during his tenure: Recapitalizing and modernizing the oldest inventory of aircraft in the history of the Air Force, training and developing young airmen in a tumultuous time, and sustaining ongoing operations in two theatres of war as well as a worldwide fight against al-Qaida. Buzz tackled those significant challenges head-on, and made substantial progress in addressing each of them. The crucial role played by the Air Force in the current fight is often and unfortunately overlooked.

Over the past 12 months, the Air Force has identified some serious lapses in attention to the nuclear mission. There were significant problems, and General Moseley took immediate action to strengthen compliance and discipline, heighten attention to detail and execution, expand inspection and evaluation, and broadly refocus the service on the nuclear mission. He and Secretary Michael Wynne have not received the credit they deserved for their efforts. But even if General Moseley will not be the one to oversee the conclusion of these efforts, there is no doubt that the Air Force will be building on the solid foundations laid by Buzz as it continues to aim for the zero-defect standard the American people are entitled to expect when it comes to nuclear weapons.

The U.S. Air Force has always held its airmen and leaders to the highest standards, and in my view, Buzz Moseley consistently exceeded them throughout more than 36 years of service. He was an outstanding leader for the Air Force, and he should be proud of what he accomplished there. Our country owes him a deep debt of gratitude. It has been an honor to work with him over the years. But more than that, it has been an honor to call him my friend. This great American goes into his retirement with my deepest appreciation. Our fellow citizens should know he is a great patriot who protected our freedoms at great personal sacrifice and with real distinction. GEN Buzz Moseley is among our very best.

STRENGTHENING MEDICARE

• Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I wish to share with my colleagues a disturbing report about the challenges

home health professionals are facing while delivering service to our Nation's seniors. Too many home health providers have seen not only declining reimbursement but also increasing fuel costs.

Last week, the New York Times highlighted how these challenges are affecting several Michigan families and home health providers. Sadly, this is a problem facing the entire Nation. The National Association for Home Care & Hospice's, NAHC, Foundation for Hospice and Homecare released a study finding that nurses, therapists, and home care aides who serve chronically ill elderly and disabled patients drive nearly 5 billion miles each year. But escalating gasoline prices threaten their ability to reach their patients, particularly in rural areas. NAHC reported that, in Michigan, home health providers drove over 161 million miles to make nearly 12 million visits to seniors and other patients in need of homebound services.

As a short-term solution, I urge my colleagues to join with me in calling for the Medicare rural home-health add-on, which expired in 2006, to be reinstated. The rural add-on bonus will have a huge impact on the ability of home health providers to serve seniors, particularly in remote, rural locations.

I ask that a copy of the New York Times article be printed in the RECORD. The material follows:

[From the New York Times, July 5, 2008]

AS GAS PRICES SOAR, ELDERLY FACE CUTS IN AID

(By John Leland)

SOUTH HAVEN, MICH.—Early last month, Jeanne Fair, 62, got her first hot meals delivered to her home in this lake town in the sparsely populated southwestern part of the state. Then after two deliveries the meals stopped because gas prices had made the delivery too expensive.

"They called and said I was outside of the delivery area," said Mrs. Fair, who is homebound and has not been able to use her left arm since a stroke in 1997.

Faced with soaring gasoline prices, agencies around the country that provide services to the elderly say they are having to cut back on programs like Meals on Wheels, transportation assistance and home care, especially in rural areas that depend on volunteers who provide their own gas. In a recent survey by the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, more than half said they had already cut back on programs because of gas costs, and 90 percent said they expected to make cuts in the 2009 fiscal year.

"I've never seen the increase in need at this level," said Robert McFalls, chief executive of the Area Agency on Aging in Palm Beach, Fla., whose office has a waiting list of 1,500 people. Volunteers who deliver meals or drive the elderly to medical appointments have cut back their miles, Mr. McFalls said.

Public agencies of all kinds are struggling with the new math of higher gas prices, lower property and sales tax revenues and increases in the minimum wage. Some communities have cut school bus routes, police patrols, traveling libraries and lawn maintenance. The St. Paul Police Department is encouraging officers to use horses and bikes. A number of state agencies, including those in Utah, are going to four-day workweeks to save energy costs and reduce commuting expenses for their employees.

But older poor people and those who are homebound are doubly squeezed by rising gas

and food prices, because they rely not just on social service agencies, but also on volunteers.

In the survey of agencies, more than 70 percent said it was more difficult to recruit and keep volunteers.

Mrs. Fair, who has limited mobility because of diabetes, lives on \$642 per month in Social Security widow's benefits, and relies on care from her son, who often works odd hours, especially during blueberry season. "He says, 'You belong in a nursing home; I can't take care of you,'" Mrs. Fair said.

The delivered meals allowed her to eat at regular hours, which helped her control her blood sugar levels, she said. Last year she lost her balance during a change in blood sugar and spent a month in a nursing home.

With no meal delivery in her area, Mrs. Fair said her home aide, who comes three times a week, must pick up frozen meals from a center in the next town.

"If my aide can't get the meals, maybe I can get my pastor to pick them up," Mrs. Fair said. "I can't travel even to the drop-off center."

Val J. Halamandaris, president of the National Association for Home Care and Hospice, said that rising fuel prices had become a significant burden for the 7,000 agencies represented by his group, with some forced to close and others compelled to shrink their service areas or reduce face-to-face visits with patients.

A recent survey by the group concluded that home health and hospice workers drove 4.8 billion miles in 2006 to serve 12 million clients. "If we lose these agencies in rural areas, we'll never get them back," Mr. Halamandaris said.

The agencies, which have suffered from Medicare cuts in recent years, are lobbying Congress to account for fuel inflation in reimbursement rates and to reinstate special increases for providers in rural areas, a program that expired in 2006.

In Union, Mich., a town among flat corn and soybean farms near the Indiana border, Bill Harman, 77, relies on a home aide to take care of his wife, Evelyn, who is 85 and has Alzheimer's disease. Mr. Harman has had to use a wheelchair since 2000 because of hip problems.

But the aide, Katie Clark, 26, may have to give up the job. She lives 25 miles away and drives 700 miles a week to provide twice-daily visits, helping Mrs. Harman dress in the morning and get to bed at night, feeding her, doing chores around the house. "And putting up with a grumpy old man," she said jokingly to Mr. Harman. Her weekly income of \$250 is being eaten up by gas expenses, which come to \$100 a week.

"Some weeks I have to borrow money to get here," said Ms. Clark, a single mother of two, adding, "They're just like family to me."

Agencies say they are facing a shortage of home aides, because the jobs have low pay and often require long drives for a few hours of work. "They can't make any money," said Laurence Schmidt, administrator for the Oswego County Office for the Aging, in rural northwest New York. "So they'll get jobs in nursing homes, where they can drive to one place and work a full shift. That is a state-wide problem."

Mr. Harman said that he thought a previous aide might have abused his wife, but that Mrs. Harman was comfortable with Ms. Clark. On a recent afternoon, Mrs. Harman called Mrs. Clark "honey"; Ms. Clark, walking Mrs. Harman to the bathroom, kissed her nose. Mrs. Harman said she was going home. Ms. Clark said, "You are home, silly."

For her work, Ms. Clark receives \$9 an hour. If she leaves, Mr. Harman said, he could not care for his wife.

He said that when they married, she raised his five children as if they were her own. When Mrs. Harman started to develop Alz-

heimer's 8 or 10 years ago, he said, "I promised her, 'Don't worry, I'll take care of you as long as I can.'"

Without an aide, he said, he would have to put his wife in a nursing home, and probably need to live in one himself.

For many isolated older people, home delivery of meals provides not just nutrition but also regular contact with the outside world, said Elaine Eubank, president of CareLink, a nonprofit agency that serves elderly people in six counties in Arkansas, delivering 480,181 meals to 18,000 people last year. Because of gas prices, Ms. Eubank said, one center in Monroe County had closed its kitchen, and others were delivering frozen meals two days a week.

Mary Margaret Cox, executive director of Meals on Wheels in Greeley, Colo., which serves meals to 300 people a day, said that her agency was trying to avoid shifting to frozen meals, but that it was getting hard to recruit students and teachers who volunteer during the summer.

"Most don't have anyone else checking up on them daily," Mrs. Cox said of her clients. "If we do more frozen meals, they'll lose that daily contact."

Many agencies said their revenues—which come from state, federal and private sources—were not keeping up with their increased expenses. "We've had one increase from Medicaid in 11 years," Ms. Eubank said. "But home care and Meals on Wheels keep people at home for a fraction of the cost of a nursing home. The state pays for care once they're in a nursing home. So our cuts may cost more than they save."

Sandra Prediger, 70, who still drives a car, said higher gas prices hit her every time she needed to go to the doctor. From her senior apartment in South Haven, she was barely able to pay her bills before gas prices rose.

"I try to help some of the ladies around here, driving them to doctors or to the store," Miss Prediger said, but a round trip to her doctor or the beauty shop now costs \$26 in gas. She has had to ask her friends to pay half. "I hate to ask," she said, "because they have less than me."

Her Social Security check arrives on the third of the month. For the few days before, her local gas station lets her write a postdated check to fill up.

On July 2, Miss Prediger had no money and owed money to the gas station. "In a few minutes," she said, "my friend Shirley will probably call and say, 'Can you take me to Wal-Mart to get needles for my diabetes?' What else can I do?"

Barbara Blumka, 67, of Buchanan, Mich., said she would continue delivering 15 or 16 meals a week though she could not afford it. She is driving a Dodge Caravan, a "gas guzzler," she said.

"I see these people's faces," said Ms. Blumka, who gets her meals at a senior center. "They're so appreciative. I think of all the people who took care of my mother in the nursing home. This is my way of giving thanks."

Christine Vanlandingham, development officer for the three-county Area Agency on Aging, said that in three to six months, the agency would have to start cutting meal deliveries to clients who get them now.

But Ms. Blumka will continue to help the homebound. Her nieces and nephews were buying her an adult tricycle for other travels. "It's neon blue," she said. "I'll ride it to the senior center." ●

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

HONORING ST. STEPHEN'S COMMUNITY HOUSE

● Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, today I honor the efforts of St. Stephen's Community House to designate July 10, 2008, Summer Learning Day.