

waste, and abuse that undermines the department's mission.

That is the Pentagon's own inspector general.

So it is time to engage in a serious debate over this Bush defense budget that elevates gold-plated technologies and huge contractor payouts over cogent and sensible strategy.

A little historical perspective is instructive. President Dwight David Eisenhower, a five-star general and the military commander of Europe during World War II, deplored excessive military spending and its diversion of resources away from pressing public needs—Dwight D. Eisenhower. A few days before he left office in 1961, President Eisenhower gave one of the most prophetic speeches ever given in the White House. Here is what Eisenhower—a Republican, I should add—what Eisenhower said:

In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.—Dwight David Eisenhower.

Fast forward 48 years to the last months of George W. Bush's Presidency. It is remarkable how prescient Eisenhower's concerns were.

Today the budget of President Bush calls for a \$515 billion Pentagon budget. This is in addition—this is in addition—to the \$200 billion a year being spent on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and it also does not include \$16 billion spent on nuclear weapons. That is why I proposed an amendment—a very modest amendment, I might say—to address one of the more egregious examples of wasteful spending in the Federal Government. The incredible amount of unneeded spare parts—what we are talking about is unneeded spare parts and other items—in the Army, Navy, Air Force, and other Department of Defense agency warehouses is measured in the billions of dollars. What we are talking about is unneeded spare parts. They don't need it, billions of dollars of unneeded spare parts.

Fixing the military inventory systems is the reason behind the amendment I have authored, along with Senator FEINGOLD and Senator WHITEHOUSE.

The Government Accountability Office—the GAO—has placed the Department of Defense inventory system on “high risk” lists year in and year out. In other words, there is a red flag attached to this line item.

The unneeded spare parts inventory and the inefficient inventory management systems are literally costing the taxpayers millions and millions of dollars each year. Worse, these unnecessary spare parts are clogging up the supply system, costing millions for storage, and are not providing the support needed for our service men and women for defending our country. More than half of the Air Force's secondary inventory—an average of \$31.4 billion—

was not needed to support service requirements. That is right. More than \$18 billion of its on-hand spare parts are beyond the needs of the Air Force. Imagine that: \$18 billion in unneeded spare parts. We have Air Force warehouses full of parts that are simply not needed.

It gets even worse than that. The Air Force has on order \$235 million in inventory already identified as ready for disposal. In case you didn't catch that: \$235 million in inventory already identified as ready for disposal. So \$235 million worth of parts not even delivered to the Air Force's warehouses will be ready for disposal by the time they arrive. Now, that may make sense to somebody—maybe the people who make money producing the stuff. It certainly does not make sense to me or, I expect, anybody else in this country. By the way, this is almost 20 percent of its total on-order inventory. It is a huge amount of inventory.

The Air Force has redefined terms and created new categories such as “Additional Applications Anticipated,” “Uneconomical to Terminate,” “Management Decision,” and “Data Error.” What they mean by data error is a series of computer entry mistakes amounting to \$96.5 million during one recent 3-month period alone. To my way of thinking, this is further evidence of the Air Force's inability to manage its inventory program. If data errors are rampant in the system, fix them. If the inventory problems can't be corrected without costing even more money, then something is wrong with the system.

This is not just an Air Force problem; it is Pentagon-wide. The numbers for the Navy and Army are also extremely troubling. The Army's numbers are incomplete because the Army could not provide data from two major agencies, including the communications and electronics commands, because their inventory computer systems were not compatible with other Army computer systems. This is with a budget of \$500 billion and we can't get computers to talk to each other. Ironically, the communications and electronics command is one of the commands responsible for Army hardware and software acquisition.

This underscores the serious problem of the inability of the Defense Department computer systems to interface with each other. My staff was actually told by an Air Force material command manager that Air Force inventory officers are still actually relying on computer systems that are based on decades-old designs.

Year after year, the nonpartisan research arm of Congress has exhorted the Pentagon to, 1, provide incentives to reduce purchases of unneeded on-order inventory; 2, conduct a comprehensive assessment of unneeded inventory items on hand; and, 3, take measures to address fluctuations in demand that produce these huge inventories.

Clearly, something must be done to set things right. It is time to get the Pentagon inventory system up to modern practices.

What does our amendment do? It does a few things. First, the amendment, offered by Senators FEINGOLD, WHITEHOUSE, and myself, will require the Secretary of Defense to develop a comprehensive plan for improving the inventory system, including each service's plan to improve audit systems for reducing the gap between projected requirements and actual requirements, improvements to information technology systems, personnel and training needs, contract reviews, and other relevant policy changes.

Second, this amendment will require a certification to Congress that the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Defense Logistics Agency have reduced their secondary inventory.

Third, this amendment strengthens the certification process by fencing off \$100 million in inventory purchases until the Secretary of Defense makes the required certifications.

This is a small but critical step toward fixing the DOD's inventory system. It is time for this Congress to impose long-needed improvement and require the Pentagon to put its house in order.

Frankly, this is just a small step forward. We have a lot more to do. This country faces enormous problems. We need money spent in many areas. We don't need to be wasting tens of billions of dollars. I look forward to working with my fellow Senators to see that this amendment becomes law.

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 over 1,000, are heartbreaking and touching. To respect their efforts, I am submitting every e-mail sent to me through energy_prices@crapo.senate.gov 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 gas prices have hit us so hard that my family cannot afford to fill up the tank but rather \$50 at a time. To fill up my diesel tank, it now costs \$160. We cannot afford vacations nor can we afford day trips to the mountains. If this is what the speculators wanted, well, they got it. We basically go to work to pay for fuel. I wanted to see my father this year in Bakersfield, California but

that is impossible now. That would be easily close to \$1,000 in fuel.

What is more frustrating is there is not a thing I can do about it. Groceries have gone up 20%, Idaho Power is planning on raising their rates, [the state of Idaho] wants to increase the car registration to \$150. I give up! When my taxes increase (sales, fees, ssn, state, fed) are more than 50%, I am planning on leaving the workforce and staying home to get all of the benefits of the poor and unemployed.

I am absolutely for a free market economy, but with all of the taxes and fuel charges and surcharges on items that require transit, it is going to break this family.

I am a [conservative, but have been disappointed with the partisan actions on many issues, including immigration, 2nd Amendment rights, national security. It sometimes feels like those we have elected to lead us have forgotten their responsibilities.]

Sincerely,

SAM, Boise.

I think we are technically smart enough to drill for oil without endangering the environment. I mean every place that oil can be found. If we listen to the extreme environmentalists, we will all starve to death in the dark!!!

STEPHEN.

The lobbyist for the oil companies are too rich and have too many politicians in their pockets. The Solar lobby consists of one man begging for tax brakes. Do the math. The federal government really does not [care] about what we, the American people think so, the best thing we (Idaho) can do is to declare sovereignty from the NeoCon/Zionist regime and just live our lives in peace and harmony. Stop killing for oil. Politicians are not intelligent enough to run my life. They are not intelligent enough to resolve the problems of the world today. You will never get anywhere with this. It is all a big joke. But, in the end, the joke will be on the politicians. You see, the Federal Reserve's dollar really is of no real value anyway. The fed has put America in debt that can never be repaid. The private bankers will repo the U.S. to be paid in full, soon. You have nothing to worry about since they already own you and your buddies in Washington. Stop wasting your time and grow a garden. Get right with God.

DOUG.

Energy prices are terribly high and that is uncalled for when we have resources in our own country available if we could lesson some of the ridiculous environmental laws that make it next to impossible to drill and refine our own oil. If we could use our own resources the price of crude oil should come down.

I am retired and live alone, so my fuel needs are not great. I have children and grandchildren whose energy needs are great and the rising prices of food, health care, etc. make life difficult for them. They work hard and some have their own businesses and they have a hard time making ends meet.

We need to make use of the nuclear resources that we already have in place in some areas of our state. Our population is growing and that brings a need for more energy for just living. We need a congress that will encourage not discourage the use of what we have while other sources of energy are being developed.

Sincerely,

FERN, Rigby.

I believe every Congressman should be tried for treason to this country who has not supported our energy independence!! They

have taken an oath to support the constitution and defend the USA from all enemies foreign and domestic!!! We have lost our sovereignty to the foreign oil countries and the problem lies at the feet of Congress!!! In such a court for treason there would be some found not guilty but there would be many who would be found guilty and should be dealt with accordingly!! Yes we need to protect our environment but if we go down as a sovereign nation, who in this world will take over our leadership on the issue of environment??? We have to get our oil and energy independence back so that we can lead the world in saving our environment!!! It is not just about money!!! It is about saving this sovereign nation!!!! Not only does our nation depend on it but all the nations of the free world depend on our survival.

LEE.

I often wonder whatever has become of Senators and Congressmen that love America beyond their own political gain? For years and years the Senate and the Congress have closed their eyes to passing bills that would have protected we Americans from the horrific gas prices we now face. This situation should never have happened! There is nothing that justifies this crisis!!! As the greatest nation on earth, we should not be dependent upon foreign oil We should never be dependent upon countries that despise America. We have enough oil in this nation to care for our own people!

How shameful what you Senators and Congressmen have done to us, the American people!!! Everyone is financially hurting. In our opinions, it is treason on your part! This situation is not going to get better until we drill here, drill now and pay less

We are disappointed and ashamed of our Senators and Congressmen who sat by, and continue to sit by and allow this nation to suffer financially. Do your job or resign!

LA VAR and MARLENA.

My husband has his own business and it is a small 2 man business but they are a valuable resource to our cities. They have a carpet/disaster and restoration company. They are always busy but because of the high price of everything especially gas it really makes it hard on them. They cannot raise their prices for fear of losing business but then again they have to pay the high price of gas to keep customers and keep them happy. It's a no win for them.

PAM.

As a citizen of the United States, and a resident of Idaho, I appreciate your call for suggestions. I have two children, 8 and 12 yrs of age—a boy and a girl. Some of the things that are affected are medical checkups that now go without being done, even with the ridiculous insurance coverage, and then entertainment. So with one big swoop, our lives have just changed in two dramatic ways, one essential at times, the other stress relief. Sad thing is I work in the oil and gas fields. I know that animal rights activists are full of crap for the most part. I see life in the fields far better off than whatever they seem to see. (Or do not see). It is safer for wild animals than it ever has been, and I just do not see why we do not drill more. I am not a huge fan of oil products being wasted, burned, and otherwise used, but let us be real. We have been addicted to this, and now rely on it. Drill, it is renewable. It regenerates, albeit at a slower rate than grass and weeds. Let us look at affordable solar harvest as well.

RICHARD, Firth.

As a small business owner (insurance agency), I have come to realize that this depend-

ence on the present energy sources is not just an incapacitation to private concerns, but will ultimately translate into higher ins. premiums due to increased repair costs arising from parts manufacture costs, repair shop employee costs etc.. This crisis will reach into every avenue of our lives. At 56, I am trying to plan for retirement. I am a licensed securities advisor, and as such probably have better information than most to help to arrive at a reasonable retirement income. However, my present plan, due to energy prices has become doubtful. If my situation is such, what of the common laborer? Will the gov't find themselves caring for the aged in an even bigger way than at present? Where will they get the funds with the increase of baby boomers and reduction of upcoming generations? The energy crisis will be a tremendous cost to our American way of life. I personally believe that all americans should be appraised of those in their voting district that do not support a more aggressive move into the future of energy independence. Perhaps those in elected offices will find themselves more interested in acting upon the will of the masses and less interested in the special interest groups, their money, and in particular the environmentalists. While the invironment must be preserved, it also must be utilized and not be allowed to go unmanaged. I appreciate your concerns, and would like to see someone provide the voting public, the "real time" voting records of those in office. It is always after the fact that the information is recieved, if at all. Only when one's livelihood is at risk, will a person act decisively. Perhaps that would apply to those in office as a result of instant notification of a negative vote.

Sincerely,

JERRY.

Sixteen years ago we moved 12 miles west of Blackfoot on a small acreage to raise our two daughters along with our dogs, cats, horses, and birds. Our oldest daughter has some learning disabilities and is now an active Special Olympics athlete. It was a long road to where she is today and that was an amazing journey. Not long after moving, through our church's children's ministry, we became aware of a great need for safe and nurturing homes for damaged children. We eventually adopted two boys and it was a good thing we lived in the country because they liked to make noise. Some years later we started to take in foster children and have now had about 30 needy kids in our home (at different times I assure you). Early in that venture we developed a relationship with the Shoshone-Bannock people at Fort Hall and they have great needs for homes to take care of their damaged children. Many of our foster kids have been native children and we now have three for which the tribe has allowed us guardianship. These children are very needy and spend time daily with various therapists and the oldest went to a developmental preschool this year. Because of their needs, and our oldest daughter's job at Wal-Mart, our vehicles do not even cool off most days. My wife makes several trips to Blackfoot and to various therapists every day. We travel 500 miles a week or more and the gas prices are painful. However, we just do what it takes. Relief from gas prices would be a wonderful blessing but it does cause a dilemma for us because we are very conservative and do not believe the government should solve all of our problems. However, there are appropriate issues for the government to take responsibility for and this may be one.

We have entrusted you with representing our interests to the federal government so please evaluate this issue very carefully and

if you can find a sound moral and ethical way to help us continue our contribution to our community and our neighbors please strive for that.

Thanks for your service.

DENNIS, *Blackfoot*.

First it is nice to hear that the Senate is at least thinking about it but I have to say that if the Senate needs families to write a few paragraphs to explain what impact these conditions are placing on the American family then I am not sure the Senate is in touch with reality as they should be.

I have worked hard all my life and have provided well for my family. I am very thankful for the opportunities given me. I know that with hard work, kindness for our fellow man we will continue to do well. However, these impacts will be negative in the long run. They are putting undue stress on my family, on my life and every discussion everyday is about these prices and the affects it has on every aspect of the economy. There will be less productivity, less education, more broken families due to the financial stress and probably most important less faith in our system.

The American public has a government in place that has become so out of touch with who it represents that I am not sure anything will or can be done. There is too much greed and dishonesty in our government system and those that lead this country are in it for their own prosperity and not the prosperity and best interests of the people. I feel the liberals only want power and control. And I am not sure what the Republicans represent anymore.

These energy prices impact every aspect of our lives, security and well being. If our government will not do the right thing immediately then there will be ramifications beyond belief and for generations to come. I am sure you know this but I hope you do . . . Our forefathers would have never have let this happen. We would be totally independent of all foreign control. They would have known the liberty and safety of this country would be at jeopardy.

Best Regards,

DAVID.

Today, I was in a grocery store where the fellow in line in front of me bought a small bag of tomatoes for \$7.00. Tomatoes are not in season here, and have to be shipped from California. The clerk said we will no longer be able to buy Cyrus O'Leary pies, as the company is located in Spokane, almost 100 miles away, and they are no longer willing to deliver further than 30 miles. We are going to have to change our ways of living, buying more locally produced goods. There is great opportunity here for new local businesses. People are going to have to once again learn how to eat the food that is in season. Maybe local butcher shops will once again thrive, and be able to compete with the giant slaughter houses. None of this local economic development will happen if we once again are able to buy cheap gas.

I do not favor anything that will bring the price of gas down. Our own natural reserves of oil in the ground should be saved for future generations to be used in manufacturing and other basic industries, instead of being burned up in internal combustion machines. I agree with you wholeheartedly that we need to turn to nuclear (providing there is adequate resources of uranium) and other non oil energy sources, and end our dependence on oil. Without the pain involved in high oil prices, there will not be the will to make this difficult transition. Please stop trying to extract the last drop of oil from the ground so we can have cheap gas, and start thinking about the future.

JANET.

This hits the nail on the head, Senator. Until we cut down on the long-range use of fuels in this country for private transportation, the costs will—most likely—continue to accumulate and even accelerate.

We see it on the highway as semi after semi tools along burning more fuel than an equivalent freight train to handle the same load. Somehow we have to come to grips with this or we are going to find ourselves either walking, or starving, or both.

We see it on the highways and bi-ways of this country as 4-wheelers burn up fuel for recreation that could be put to better use. And, if you so much as suggest this might be a waste of precious resources, your political career would be in jeopardy!

I appreciate the positive steps that you have taken in regard to legislation. The solutions are going to be hard—drill for oil, conserve what we have, eliminate unnecessary trips and combine errands to save gas. And quit using gasoline for recreational uses. These are some of the first steps.

But, ultimately, we are going to have to look deeply at the problem of public transportation in this country. People are too selfish and too intent on achieving their own ends to cooperate until the situation becomes dire.

But I am sure you will agree that this attitude of "you will have to pry my dead hands off the steering wheel (or handlebars) to get me to stop my wasteful practices" will actually only cease when we run out of oil or can no longer afford it. And that will be too late to do anyone any good.

Limited public transportation options mean that many of us do not have any choice but to keep driving and paying those ever-increasing prices for fuel

RAY.

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL ERIC J. WILBUR

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, it is my honor to pay tribute today to COL Eric J. Wilbur, Vice Commander of the 37th Training Wing at Lockland Air Force Base. On February 1, 2009, Colonel Wilbur will retire after a distinguished 20-year military career in which he has honorably and faithfully served his country. Among many other awards, Colonel Wilbur has been decorated with the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star, and the Defense Meritorious Service Award.

I have always considered it a privilege to highlight the distinguished service of those men and women serving in the military, especially when they have Iowa ties. As an Iowa native and graduate of Iowa State University, I am confident that Colonel Wilbur retires not only with the esteem and admiration of his peers, subordinates, and country but also his hometown of West Union, IA, and all Iowans.

Through his distinguished career, Colonel Wilbur has been a noteworthy example of the definition of loyalty, dedication, and sacrifice. Today I would like to extend my personal thanks to Colonel Wilbur for faithfully serving his country with excellence, as well as my congratulations on his much deserved retirement. Men and women such as Colonel Wilbur deserve to be recognized for their service and patriotism.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CONGRATULATING LAURA SANDERS

• Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I congratulate Ms. Laura Sanders as Kentucky's 2008 No Child Left Behind American Star of Teaching. Initiated in 2004, the American Starts of Teaching is part of the U.S. Department of Education's Teacher-to-Teacher Initiative. By offering regional and district workshops, roundtables for teachers and principals, and digital learning, the Teacher-to-Teacher Initiative allows some of our nation's best teachers to share strategies to raise student achievement and inform teachers of successful research-based practices. Each year, over one million, students are taught by a teacher who participated in the Teacher-to-Teacher Initiative.

Ms. Sanders, a kindergarten teacher at Cumberland Trace Elementary School in Bowling Green, KY, has been recognized as one of Kentucky's top teachers. She developed teaching practices in her classroom along with research-based materials that have helped her students to consistently make clear improvements. Over the past 2 years, her students' reading scores have gone from the 50th percentile in the fall to over the 85th and 91st percentile the following spring. Ms. Sanders' ability to assess the individual needs of each student has enabled her to ensure that every child is working at an appropriate pace and level. Having already been a recipient of numerous awards for her contribution to education, her work is widely recognized.

I am proud to recognize Ms. Sanders for her ability to effectively challenge students at Cumberland Trace Elementary School, while at the same time sharing her techniques with other teachers—making a difference in the lives of students. Her work is an inspiration to the citizens of Kentucky and to teachers everywhere. I look forward to seeing all that she will accomplish in the future.●

HONORING THE HEALTH OCCUPATION STUDENTS OF AMERICA

• Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the Health Occupation Students of America, HOSA, for their accomplishments over the past 32 years. Composed of 100,000 students in nearly 3,000 chapters across the Nation, HOSA is providing the knowledge, skills and opportunity for secondary and postsecondary students to enter the health care workforce. Through health science curricula, personal development exercises, practical work in the health care field and medical competitions at the local and national levels, HOSA Advisors and students prepare a healthcare workforce not only to serve but also to lead our country.

Now more than ever, we need organizations like HOSA to address critical