

exacerbate the public health concern of underage drinking.

We believe that such an approach is irresponsible and would lead to more of the tragic consequences associated with underage alcohol use documented in the U.S. Surgeon General's 2007 Call to Action to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking.

Teen deaths and injuries, traffic accidents, physical assaults and other violent acts, risky sexual behavior, and school failure, among other potentially lifelong consequences, would increase as a result.

Lowering the drinking age also runs counter to scientific research that shows underage drinking can affect brain development, which we now know continues into the mid-to late twenties. Scientific evidence further shows that underage drinking is related to future alcohol dependence and other substance abuse.

Approximately 96 percent of alcohol-dependent adults started drinking before the age of 21.

For the past 20 plus years, so many have worked tirelessly and diligently to keep our youth and our communities safe and healthy by reducing the prevalence of alcohol use among those under 21, with the current legal drinking age limit a large part of our success.

Although we are under no illusion that problems persist, we must continue to confront them head on, vigilantly and responsibly, and resist easy efforts to turn back the clock and undo years of steady progress.

Seventy-eight percent of Americans oppose lowering the drinking age from 21 to 18, so the public gets the message.

We recognize that colleges have a tremendous problem with binge drinking.

Young people are drinking more aggressively than ever before. The solution is really about changing the culture of alcohol consumption. In many respects, we have achieved this change in culture for youth tobacco use. We must now change the culture as it relates to underage drinking.

The bottom line is children who are connected to family, community and society are less prone to drink alcohol.

It's just a shame that some college administrators didn't do their homework, and our children are the ones who would pay the price.

When children drink, America loses.

#### 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 the e-mail address set up 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 increased energy costs have had a profound effect on my ability to meet the needs of myself and my family. My oldest son broke his leg in June 2007. It was a life-threatening break, he is not healing properly and will continue to be unable to work for another six months at a minimum. The family was evicted from their home and are struggling to survive. They receive food stamps and medical assistance, but nothing else. Fortunately I have a trailer house, which they were able to move in to. I currently pay their electricity and transportation to and from medical appointments, getting groceries, etc. not to mention extracurricular activities for the children, as well as my own utilities and gasoline. I have paid nearly \$500 per month during the winter months for our electricity and am still paying over \$300 each month. My job requires me to travel daily, and I average 500 miles per week in mileage. With the excessive costs of gasoline and electricity, I am currently working 45-50 hours each week and still falling behind on my bills. I do not have credit card debt, but have a student loan I cannot pay and one other small loan. My only other debts consist of a house payment, car payment, and property taxes. I am at risk of losing my house in a year because I cannot pay the taxes. My ex-husband is threatening to take the property away because I cannot afford to pay him \$100 per month to finish buying him out. I will be 51 this month and am not in the best of health—but I do what I have to in order to provide for myself and my family. I take medication but am not able to get my prescription filled because I owe the doctor \$44 and he will not call in a new script until he is paid. That payment to the doctor is one tank of gas—that is all—and I could die, or worse have a stroke, without my medication. Something needs to change, and soon.

BARBARA, *South Central Idaho.*

I received your email asking for Idahoans' stories related to the increase in gas prices, and I appreciate that these prices are affecting everyone and that you are working to fight them. Further, I support that you fought the Warner-Lieberman bill, though probably not for the reasons that you did. However, I am writing to ask that you do, in fact, seriously consider Representative Ed Markey's new bill, "Investing in Climate Action Policy Act." While I admit that I am unsure of the impact that this bill will have on gas prices, I seriously believe that we must begin to enact bills that combat climate change. Being from Idaho, I am sure that we both appreciate the outdoors and how beautiful places like the Sawtooths and the Frank Church Wilderness are. However, I feel that the beauty that we are currently able to find here is threatened by global warming, and I entreat you to do something about it. Representative Markey's bill is a good start.

You asked about the priorities that Congress should set in resolving the oil crisis, with "increasing domestic oil production" at the top of your list. However, I do not believe that this is a reasonable option. The U.S. hit peak oil years ago, there simply is not that much more to get out of here. Also, when you think of domestic oil, please think of ANWR. Imagine if, instead of in ANWR, oil was found in the Sawtooths. Could you really, in good faith, support taking oil out of the Sawtooths?

Instead, I believe that one of the options you suggested is by far the best. There should be incentives for conservation of oil. Ultimately, the incentive will be more money in your pocket, because quite honestly, I believe the oil prices will keep going up until it becomes too expensive for people

to use so freely and they begin to conserve it in order to save money. However, a good short term idea would be to set up incentives and to invest in alternative fuels. Ultimately, we will run out of oil and I only hope that when that time comes we are prepared for it, and prepared to switch entirely to renewable energy sources.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

SAMANTHA, *Boise.*

I am married, with three young kids, ages 9, 7, and 5. I am a detective for the Ada County Sheriff's Office, and I make just over \$60,000 a year. My wife works part-time out of our house as a Pampered Chef consultant, and probably makes about \$10-15,000 per year, after taxes and deductions.

We have a strict cash budget, and have no debt except for our house. We own a 7-year-old Dodge Durango, and a 14-year-old Chevy Camaro, both gas guzzlers. We are actually in a pretty good financial position, and are blessed.

We currently budget \$100 every two weeks for fuel. This increased from about \$60 recently. Part of the increase was because we sold our Toyota Corolla (good gas mileage), and got our Camaro (not so good). However, I would blame most of the increase on the rising gas prices. (We sold the Corolla because it was our last debt that we wanted to pay off, and start over debt free.)

We are able to survive on this \$100 because we have reduced our driving dramatically. We put a lot more thought into our daily errands, etc. We have been riding our bicycles as much as possible, but only for short distances because of our young kids.

Unfortunately, all of this "thinking" about our driving limits our freedom. I have not felt this limited by fuel costs since I was in high school, and barely had a couple bucks to put in my gas tank. This past weekend I took my boys camping. I wanted to go to a favorite place I went to as a kid, but it is four hours away. Because of gas prices, I was not able to do that, and settled on CJ Strike Reservoir, which must be similar to ANWR, a mosquito paradise, so we left a day early after my son got bit 31 times.

We regular citizens are frustrated at the lack of action by our Congress. I am not an economist, but I believe the very statement by our government that we are going to begin using our own natural resources for energy, would potentially reduce gas prices. I realize that the liberals in Congress are the problem. In Idaho, we are blessed by some pretty good representatives.

I appreciate all you can do for our families. Take care, and God Bless.

MATT, *Meridian.*

You have got to be kidding!! Only \$50 more per month? My fuel bills have doubled in the last year and you only think they have gone up \$50? What world are you living in? The fact of the matter is, for a farmer in Idaho, our fuel bills have nearly doubled. My fuel bill to deliver my fish has gone from \$800 per week to over \$1500 per week.

To answer your question, I believe the CEO from Shell when he said to the Senate, the real cost of oil should be between \$35 and \$60 per barrel—all costs over and above that amount are because of government.

You do not listen, you do not know, and you pretend to care. (There are many issues that have come before Congress that have not taken the public's best interests to heart, and have caused us more expense and trouble. Among those issues are the Public Employees investment funds, domestic oil drilling, Chinese allowed to drill right off our own coast when we cannot, NAFTA, nuclear power support, devaluation of the dollar, terrorists given rights by the Supreme Court.)

(Given my frustration with Congress, you can imagine how I feel about your last statement, "together we can spur some real action?" The only thing that seems to happen is the Congress spends more money and expends a lot of hot air.)

It ought to be interesting when fuel gets to \$6.

I doubt anyone on your staff will read this; you certainly will not, but have a nice day anyway.

DON, Buhl.

I, being a retired person on a fixed income, [find] it is very hard to get by. The prices are up for most everything because of delivery costs. I will be 70 years old this summer and I have no choice but to go cut, split and stack firewood so I can afford to heat my home next winter. The government should have been doing something about it two years ago and not waited until folks are ready to revolt countrywide.

OPEC sells oil for \$136.00 a barrel.

OPEC nations buy U.S. grain at \$7.00 a bushel.

Solution: Sell grain for \$136.00 a bushel.

Cannot afford it, tough! Eat your oil!

Ought to go well with a nice thick grilled filet of camel (steak).

Unsigned.

Since you asked for our energy stories I will submit this one. My wife and I own three vehicles, a 2000 Buick, a 1992 Ford Bronco and a 2006 Suzuki motorcycle (an on-off road type). I ride my bike everywhere I can and my wife takes the car. I scrape the frost off my bike seat some mornings because, for every trip I take the Bronco to work, I can take the bike three times. We have to drive and it takes 30 gallons to fill the Bronco. At \$3.94 a gallon, it really adds up. I rode my bike into December last year and broke it out in March this year. If the roads were bare and there was not a threat of snow, I rode it. I remember the 1980s when the speed limit was lowered to 55 mph to conserve fuel so that is what I do now again. If it helped then, I hope it will help now. This is not a noble plan to conserve energy; it is a trial to spend so much on fuel and I can cut costs this way.

Maybe you can explain why our "friends" who supply us the oil need to gouge us so badly. Maybe \$120.00 for a barrel of wheat would make the point in all export sales going to oil producing nations. And speaking of the high price of gas, do we export wheat and other food grains cheaper than we can buy it here at home? Are our shortages caused by or aided by sales to export markets? If so, that is wrong! We need to take care of American needs first. I really do not mind sharing what I have with my neighbors but I'll feed my kids first.

Thanks for listening,

MARK.

I do appreciate your concern about gas prices for those in Idaho. I lived in Idaho last year when I signed up for your newsletters, I now live in Washington, Tri Cities, where we pay approximately 25 cents more per gallon than most do in Idaho. I am writing because my daughter lives in Sandpoint where gas prices are about the same as here. She has a disabled daughter that requires my daughter to take her to Spokane, Washington, about 70 miles one way. Due to the increase in gas prices, she has had to miss some of her doctor's appointments.

I believe that we have enough domestic oil to keep this country going for at least enough years to allow us to develop an alternative energy source. So I do not understand why that we are paying such high prices, except that the Big Oil Companies are making

a fortune off the American People that can hardly afford to feed their families now due to the increase in cost. Also from what I can see, the prices are going to continue to rise and run our economy into the ground due to the greed of the Big Oil.

Put a windfall profit tax on them and they will rethink what they are doing. We cannot afford to keep paying higher prices for gas, which is increasing the cost of everything that is delivered by truck. Our economy is in a downward spiral and, if Congress does not stop it, then there will be no economy left in a couple of years.

ARNOLD, West Richland, Washington.

As a United States citizen and fellow Idahoan, I feel the need to share my financial pain with you about what it is like to pay for high fuel (gasoline, diesel) prices. Like anyone with an automobile, I pay more at the pump to the tune of around \$50-\$100 more per month. I think this pales in comparison to how much more I am paying for any commodity sold through any retail outlet. Nearly everything in the good old U.S.A. travels down our highways, and the extra costs of these goods is eating away at any disposable income I might have had for, let us say, dinner out one night, a night at the movies, etc. My income did not see this exponential rise to help combat the higher cost of living. Therefore I spend less on other things, which in turn, does not help my local economy. Multiply my woes by the hundreds of thousands like me, or worse off than myself, and we will continue to see our economy in decline.

As for a fix, I will give my opinion on this as well. Why is an energy source like crude oil any different from electricity and natural gas? Am I going out on a limb by saying, although my heating and cooling bills have gone up, they haven't quadrupled in the last eight years. Why? Well as you know the government does not allow the companies that sell us power or natural gas to just raise prices whenever they feel like it. Should not we treat big oil companies the same way? What is the difference between the need for one source of power and another?

The U.S. economy is so incredibly dependent on petroleum products, I think it is irresponsible of our government officials to not step in and provide some long term relief for the U.S. consumer/citizen. Step it up and take control of this situation before we all are made to suffer through a multi-year recession.

Thank you for your time.

TOM, Lewiston.

Thank you for your e-letter of this date. In the Big Lost River Valley, mass transit will not be efficient, but neighbors can be increasingly efficient. We and our neighbors are beginning a neighborhood plan whereby we coordinate medical, pharmacy, dental, shopping and other errands, mostly to Idaho Falls, nearly 90 miles distant, to reduce individual gasoline purchases. By previewing times and schedules, we can accomplish numerous tasks in the destination city with fewer vehicles/travel. My neighbors and I agree substantially with the points made in your e-letter: aggressively promote increased domestic production and refining of gas and oil products, nuclear power/electricity production and electric and hydrogen power for automobiles. The unintended consequences of the ethanol program will lead us to proper caution about alternative fuels. Thank you for your good works.

Most respectfully,

DAVID, Darlington.

I think the current U.S. government may be on the way to causing civil war!!! You

hear it on the streets, how [angry] people are getting at [the inaction]. The environmentalists seem to hold undue influence over decisions and legislation from Congress. I do not believe that global warming is a threat. Both political parties have not been able to address the public's concerns about energy, and the federal government just keeps spending more and more taxpayer dollars.]

Drill here, drill now.

Secure the border.

DWAYNE.

My husband and I are seniors; we are in our 70s. We are not suffering as much from the high gas prices as our grandchildren are. Our youngest grandson is 17, and we have grandchildren who are 26. Boise wages are not the greatest, so it is really putting a dent in their budgets when gas prices are so high. I have wanted a decent transit (bus) system in Boise and Ada County forever. We have lived in Boise since June 1970. I came from Portland, Oregon. That is a city that can be very proud of their transit system. The buses run day and night, seven days a week.

I do not know why Boise has to be so slow with progress. A good bus system would be invaluable now. There has to be a transfer system so you can get where you need to go. I wish some of the "powers that be in Boise" would go to Portland and study their bus (transit) system.

I have a sister who lives in Salem, Oregon, the state capital, and they have a wonderful bus system also. Boise is a state capital and our bus system is tragic. Look at the gas that could be saved if people could ride buses and could depend on buses. A street car system downtown is not going to help very many people! I do drive, and I drive a large car. I never go downtown, but if there was a good bus system that I could use, I would bus downtown a lot. I live out by 5 Mile and Victory and where I live there are no buses.

Sincerely,

SALLY.

This probably does not fit your agenda, but actually, gasoline prices have been a lot worse. I paid a much higher percentage of my income when I was stationed overseas. The Energy Information Administration says we were reaching much deeper into our pockets to pay for gasoline in 1980 than last year. The real difference is that today's money buys less value. So, the best way the government can keep gasoline affordable is to stop creating inflation. The next thing you could do is require automobile makers to deliver cars that get better mileage. USA cars need to be more competitive.

JIM.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### BROOKLYN-GUERNSEY-MALCOLM COMMUNITY EDUCATION

● Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, in Iowa and across the United States, a new school year has begun. As you know, Iowa public schools have an excellent reputation nationwide, and Iowa students' test scores are among the highest in the Nation.

I would like to take just a few minutes today to salute the dedicated teachers, administrators, and school board members in the Brooklyn-Guernsey-Malcolm Community School District, and to report on their participation in a unique Federal partnership to repair and modernize school facilities.