

(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 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.

This fall marks the 10th year of the Iowa Demonstration Construction Grant Program. That is its formal name, but it is better known among educators in Iowa as the program of Harkin grants for Iowa public schools. Since 1998, I have been fortunate to secure a total of \$121 million for the State government in Iowa, which selects worthy school districts to receive these grants for a range of renovation and repair efforts—everything from updating fire safety systems to building new schools or renovating existing facilities. In many cases, this Federal funding is used to leverage public and/or private local funding, so it often has a tremendous multiplier effect in a local school district.

The Brooklyn-Guernsey-Malcolm Community School District received a Harkin Grant totaling \$435,824 which was used to help renovate the high school. The district also received three fire safety grants totaling \$95,800 to upgrade the fire alarm system and make other improvements. The Federal grants have made it possible for the district to provide quality and safe schools for their students.

Excellent schools do not just pop up like mushrooms after a rain. They are the product of vision, leadership, persistence, and a tremendous amount of collaboration among local officials and concerned citizens. I salute the entire staff, administration, and governance in the Brooklyn-Guernsey-Malcolm Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education—president Beverly Rens, Bob Parker, Travis Solem, Arlene Ford, Kyle Montgomery, Ed Kline, Larry Pendarvis and former board members Gaynell Conner and LaVerne Kriegel. I would also like to recognize superintendent Brad Hohensee, former superintendent Terry McLeod and high school principal Rick Radcliffe.

As we mark the 10th anniversary of the Harkin school grant program in Iowa, I am obliged to point out that many thousands of school buildings and facilities across the United States are in dire need of renovation or replacement. In my State of Iowa alone, according to a recent study, some 79 percent of public schools need to be upgraded or repaired. The harsh reality is that the average age of school buildings in the United States is nearly 50 years.

Too often, our children visit ultra-modern shopping malls and gleaming sports arenas on weekends, but during the week go to school in rundown or antiquated facilities. This sends exactly the wrong message to our young people about our priorities. We have to do better.

That is why I am deeply grateful to the professionals and parents in the Brooklyn-Guernsey-Malcolm Community School District. There is no question that a quality public education for every child is a top priority in that community. I salute them, and wish

them a very successful new school year.●

CENTRAL CLINTON 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 Central Clinton Community School District, and to report on their participation in a unique Federal partnership to repair and modernize school facilities.

This fall marks the 10th year of the Iowa Demonstration Construction Grant Program. That is its formal name, but it is better known among educators in Iowa as the program of Harkin grants for Iowa public schools. Since 1998, I have been fortunate to secure a total of \$121 million for the State government in Iowa, which selects worthy school districts to receive these grants for a range of renovation and repair efforts—everything from updating fire safety systems to building new schools or renovating existing facilities. In many cases, this Federal funding is used to leverage public and/or private local funding, so it often has a tremendous multiplier effect in a local school district.

The Central Clinton Community School District received a 2000 Harkin grant totaling \$259,750 which it used to help build an addition for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs at Ekstrand Elementary. This school is a modern, state-of-the-art facility that befits the educational ambitions and excellence of this school district. Indeed, it is the kind of school facility that every child in America deserves.

Excellent new schools do not just pop up like mushrooms after a rain. They are the product of vision, leadership, persistence, and a tremendous amount of collaboration among local officials and concerned citizens. I salute the entire staff, administration, and governance in the Central Clinton Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education—Dr. Kurt Rickard, Dennis Campbell, Jim Irwin, Bill Turnis and Christy Kunz and former board members Jim Hand, Lois Black, Donna Bark, and Theresa Kelly. I would also like to recognize superintendent Dan Peterson, former superintendent Dr. Dan Roe and Mary Reuter, editor of the Dewitt Observer.

As we mark the 10th anniversary of the Harkin school grant program in Iowa, I am obliged to point out that many thousands of school buildings and facilities across the United States are in dire need of renovation or replacement. In my State of Iowa alone, according to a recent study, some 79

percent of public schools need to be upgraded or repaired. The harsh reality is that the average age of school buildings in the United States is nearly 50 years.

Too often, our children visit ultra-modern shopping malls and gleaming sports arenas on weekends, but during the week go to school in rundown or antiquated facilities. This sends exactly the wrong message to our young people about our priorities. We have to do better.

That is why I am deeply grateful to the professionals and parents in the Central Clinton Community School District. There is no question that a quality public education for every child is a top priority in that community. I salute them, and wish them a very successful new school year.●

CLARKSVILLE 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 Clarksville Community School District, and to report on their participation in a unique Federal partnership to repair and modernize school facilities.

This fall marks the 10th year of the Iowa Demonstration Construction Grant Program. That is its formal name, but it is better known among educators in Iowa as the program of Harkin grants for Iowa public schools. Since 1998, I have been fortunate to secure a total of \$121 million for the State government in Iowa, which selects worthy school districts to receive these grants for a range of renovation and repair efforts—everything from updating fire safety systems to building new schools or renovating existing facilities. In many cases, this Federal funding is used to leverage public and/or private local funding, so it often has a tremendous multiplier effect in a local school district.

The Clarksville Community School District received a 2002 Harkin grant totaling \$139,500 which it used to help renovate classrooms in the elementary school. The district also received two fire safety grants totaling \$50,000 to install smoke and heat detectors, emergency lighting, electromagnetic devices and to make other improvements throughout the district. The Federal grants have made it possible for the district to provide quality and safe schools for their students.

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