

bills. We have an all electric home and electricity has also went way up in price. We watch propane and natural gas to see if it would be better for us to change, but they have also skyrocketed and just the cost of changing is unaffordable. We also live in fear of losing our Social Security and Medicare because they want to privatize it.

I think what you say you are trying to do now is the right thing but why did not you do this sooner before the tax cut for the rich oil companies was put in force and why do not you speak up and stop these tax cuts from becoming permanent. This is part of what is putting the squeeze on the American people. Thank you very much for giving me the chance to express my opinion.

LOIS.

I concur with policies that will take advantage of wind and solar power technologies, and renewable/alternative fuels. I wish you would reconsider the use of nuclear reactors as I am concerned for our safety and the waste disposable. Without a doubt, we (USA) need to take action ASAP please pass legislation so that we can start using our oil reserves but also start investing in new technologies so that some day we will not need oil all together. I have confidence in our abilities to get this done but it has to have the support of our government and you are in the position to help make a difference to help make the USA a better place to live. Thank you for your time.

UNSIGNED.

I recently traded my 4-wheel-drive Toyota pickup with 35,000 miles on it for a Toyota Camry that gets ten more miles per gallon. I was looking for a 2008 Camry LE 4-cylinder. There were none in stock. All sold out! The 2009 models are in now. The dealership Tom Scott Motors told me all the 4-cylinders were sold by the time gas prices hit \$3.50 per gallon. And the V6s were not selling. Two dealerships offered me \$1,000 to \$3,000 less than my pickup was worth as per Kelly Blue book citing the 4-wheel-drive gas guzzler option was the problem. They said I was lucky I was trading a Toyota and not a full-sized truck. They are not even taking them in trade now and, if they do, the offer is \$8,000 to \$9,000 back of Kelly Blue Book. I got \$13,750 for my trade. In March when gas was \$3.00. It was worth \$16,775 cash.

You know, it is the politicians that created this theft of Idaho assets in this regard. I am not convinced the politicians will resolve it any time soon. They should have started drilling and building refineries in the 1990s. But good luck with your efforts.

PERRY, *Meridian*.

TRIBUTE TO LINDA NORRIS

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, late this fall, my longest-serving staff member, Linda Norris, will be retiring from my staff. Linda has provided 18 years of professional, tireless and dedicated service to the people of Idaho, first as a member of my first House campaign staff in the early 1990s, then as my regional director in Twin Falls, ID, and my State director of constituent services on my Senate staff while retaining her position as Twin Falls regional director. She spent the last few years here in my Washington, DC, office, finishing her time on my staff in her function as State director of constituent services. Linda has consistently worked long hours over the years, and helped me immeasurably by her excel-

lence in the field of constituent and community services and military and veteran relations.

When I met Linda in 1991, I was beginning my bid for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, representing the Second Congressional District of Idaho. She asked me very direct questions about my stand on issues, my goals were I to be elected, and my priorities. She vetted me. Once she was satisfied that I met her standards, she offered to take over regional operations for my campaign in south central Idaho in the Magic Valley and Sun Valley area. That began what was to be a highly successful working relationship of close to two decades, and a close personal friendship of a lifetime for me, my wife and family.

Linda has worked diligently on every task that she took on, either given to her or ideas she pursued independently. She has been involved in land issues, helping as we negotiated sensitive access and conservation policies with the tribes, the Air Force, the Idaho Department of Lands, private entities and the counties in the 1990s. She was my office liaison for the Harriman hiking trail in Sun Valley that finally was completed just a few years ago. A nurse by training, Linda is the reason why I became so closely involved in domestic violence issues. She was the first to crystallize the issue by arranging for me to visit a safe house where I met two children physically and emotionally devastated by brutality in their home. At that moment, I pledged to do all I could to work toward eliminating this terrible violence that occurs in too many homes across the United States and beyond.

Linda has a special place in her heart for the military and for veterans. As an Army spouse, she brought a special sense of empathy to her work, together with an extraordinarily perceptive understanding of protocol that goes a long way in ensuring that a Member of Congress's office maintains a positive relationship with Department of Defense officials. The importance of this cannot be understated when it comes to helping Idaho military members and veterans when they have questions or concerns about military and veterans' affairs issues. Linda leaves my office held in very high esteem by both Idaho and national military and veterans affairs officials. Linda also has been solely responsible for the past 15 years for the military academy nomination process in my office. The other members of the Idaho delegation have even advised new staff members to talk to her about the proper procedures and protocol for this complicated and very important process. And, close to 10 years ago, Linda suggested that I create the Spirit of Idaho and Spirit of Freedom awards. The Spirit of Idaho award recognizes extraordinary efforts of Idahoans for community service performed outside of their work life. The Spirit of Freedom Award is one that I present annually to veterans and vol-

unteers for their service to our country and to veterans.

Linda has worked behind the scenes, helping countless constituents when they encounter difficulties with federal agency processes and procedures. She has done everything from facilitate a faster passport application, to helping a number of Idahoans receive Purple Hearts and other military awards, and even helped family members obtain them for relatives long deceased. Linda has celebrated with people who have had long-term problems resolved and cried with mothers who have gotten frightening, desperate calls from a son or daughter deployed overseas and going through bouts of depression or worse. Through it all, she has maintained her composure, professionalism and judicious compassion. Linda also has a reputation for being a patient teacher and mentor. She has provided new staff members with effective training and advice.

In all the years Linda has worked for me, she has put Idahoans first and strictly adhered to the ethical and moral requirements of congressional staff work. I could ask for no better service nor could Idahoans. Linda Norris will be missed by staff and constituents alike, and I will miss her professional counsel and hard work. Fortunately, my wife and I have years of her friendship to look forward to, and she knows that Susan and I wish her the best as she begins a new and different journey in her life.

ADOPTION AND CHILD WELFARE POLICY

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, today I would like to talk about the history of adoption and child welfare policy and the importance of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 which passed in wrap-up on Monday, September 22, 2008.

First, I want to commend Chairman BAUCUS and Senator GRASSLEY and their professional staffs who have done incredible work to forge a consensus and develop this bold package. Subcommittee Chairman MCDERMOTT and Congressman WELLER and their staffs showed the same leadership and commitment in the House. It was a privilege to be part of the process. This is a strong package with extraordinary broad-based support from the adoption community, child advocates, and even State groups. That consensus was essential to move the legislation and act on behalf of vulnerable children in foster care.

This strong bipartisan, bicameral package will help promote adoption, support guardianship, and improve the outcomes in foster care. The package and the process build on the legacy of the 1997 Adoption and Safe Families Act. In 1997, a bipartisan group came together and developed legislation that started the adoption incentive program, an initiative that spurred genuine change in the child welfare system

including doubling the number of adoptions from foster care over the decade. This means that 443,000 children from foster care have a permanent home and a family, and 3,600 are West Virginia children. A family and a permanent home makes all the difference for a child. The 1997 act also changed the reasonable efforts provisions to restore balance and help focus on the best interest of a child, and providing a safe, stable and permanent home.

The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 is a historic initiative to further promote adoption and permanency for children. It will eliminate, over time, the outdated connection between adoption assistance eligibility with the broken Aid To Families with Dependent Children, AFDC, a program that was terminated in 1996. The new Adoption Assistance Program is phased in over 10 years, starting with the oldest children or children who have been in care for over 5 years. The package also updates the adoption incentive program.

The bill gives States the option to invest in relative guardianship, a program that was tested and found very successful during the child welfare waivers. Children in relative placement tend to move less and get better reports from the teachers. The package also makes a special investment to promote the promising kinship navigator program to provide support and referrals to the millions of grandparents and relatives raising their kin. It provides new tools and direction to locate relatives as possible care providers. This is an important option that will lead to more permanency for children.

The bill also requires States to do more on educational stability and directs that each child has a coordinated health plan that includes dental and mental health care. This is fundamental for each child. To help staff do a better job serving children, the bill also invests in training programs.

The legislation will also invest in the more than 20,000 young people who age out of foster care, each year. First, it requires that the youth have full support in developing a transition plan 90 days before leaving care. It is not right or appropriate for a foster teen to leave care and move into a homeless shelter. The legislation also encourages States to extend foster care beyond the age of 18 if the young person is engaged in education, job training, employment, or has a disability that prevents such engagement. Young people need and deserve support, and we know that it makes a positive difference.

Finally, for the first time, thanks to Chairman BAUCUS' leadership, the Tribes and Tribal organization will have the option of direct access to Federal foster care to serve Native American children directly.

Many of the provisions in this package, particularly improvements in adoption assistance, have been among my priorities for years. It is exciting to

work with colleagues on a success, and it will be even more rewarding to work on its implementation for children and families in West Virginia and nationwide.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE MEDIA CONSOLIDATION

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I wish today to recognize the Department of Defense for its successful, BRAC-directed consolidation of the Army, Navy, and Air Force media activities into the new Defense Media Activity on October 1, 2008. The Department of Defense has greatly enhanced the consolidation by including the Marine Corps component and the American Forces Information Service in the new Defense Media Activity.

The consolidation will improve the effectiveness and efficiency with which the Department of Defense media operations provides critical news and information to our Armed Forces around the world. In the summer of 2011, the Defense Media Activity will locate its headquarters to a state-of-the-art facility at Fort Meade, MD.

The Defense Media Activity is staffed by about 1,700 dedicated military and civilian employees who work in 15 countries. I wish the Defense Media Activity continued success in their support of the men and women of our military services and their families.

TRIBUTE TO JIM MILLER

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to honor my former budget analyst for agriculture, Jim Miller, for his exemplary service. For the last 4 years, Jim has served me as my lead agriculture adviser. His efforts have helped produce great legislative successes for our Nation's farmers and ranchers.

Jim's knowledge of agriculture is extraordinary. His encyclopedic familiarity with Federal agriculture policy allowed him to know the answer to any question I would ask about agriculture. Throughout his service, he garnered the respect and admiration of his colleagues as well as other Senators for his intelligence and his good nature. His wise counsel will be missed.

Jim came to my office in August 2004 after working for the National Farmers Union. Even though Jim had 20 years of agriculture policy expertise and had farmed in his native Washington State for over 20 years before coming to Washington, he had never worked on Capitol Hill.

But he hit the ground running. Shortly after Jim joined my staff, he helped me pass an agriculture disaster assistance package for North Dakota farmers and ranchers in 2004. He also worked for 3 long years to secure additional disaster assistance for North Dakota farmers stricken with flooding in 2005 and severe drought in 2006.

I will always remember Jim for his work during the 2008 farm bill. Jim was

my lead negotiator and captain of my farm bill team. Without his leadership and dedication, this most recent farm bill would not be as strong as it is. He gave this effort thousands upon thousands of hours of his time, working with people on both sides of the aisle and in both Houses of Congress to get a fantastic end result. He was responsible for helping me deliver the top priorities for North Dakota producers: increased farm program support levels and a standing disaster program.

I thank him for helping this Congress produce what I think is the best farm bill we have ever had. And it isn't just me that thinks this—it is reflected in the recordbreaking votes we had in the Senate and the large margin of victory we had on overriding the President's two vetoes.

Since Jim left my office, he has re-joined the National Farmers Union. I will forever be grateful for his tireless efforts, his creative thinking, his coalition building, and friendship. I wish him all the best in his new endeavor.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING ROY SILVERSTEIN, M.D.

• Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I would like to take a few moments to recognize the achievements of Dr. Roy Silverstein, an Ohioan who has dedicated his professional life to biomedical research and medicine.

Dr. Silverstein is currently chairman of the Department of Cell Biology and vice chair for translational research at the Lerner Research Institute, as well as professor of molecular medicine at the Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine at Case Western Reserve University.

Having chaired multiple grant review panels and published over 100 articles in various publications and scientific journals, Dr. Silverstein has accomplished an extraordinary number of professional milestones and achievements.

As committee chair for the American Society of Hematology, ASH, for the past 4 years, Dr. Silverstein has led the society's efforts to educate Members of Congress about hematology and the importance of Federal research funding. In this capacity, Dr. Silverstein has visited with me and my staff to educate us about the critical issues facing hematologists.

The skilled advocacy and research of Dr. Silverstein remind many of us in Congress of how crucial it is to keep NIH funding strong. His work demonstrates that NIH funding truly is a vehicle for enhancing the health and wellbeing of Americans. In addition to continuing his own research in blood clotting and bleeding disorders, Dr. Silverstein has also shown great commitment to educating our next generation of physicians and researchers. Dr. Silverstein is a superb advocate for his