

straw, corn stalks, hay, etc. (i.e. by-products), for ethanol production can be perfected, then you would have something worthwhile.

Further, the request also asked for a brief statement as to how the energy problem was affecting people. I am somewhat past the age that I expected/wanted to retire. But with the problems with the stock market, banking, mortgages, inflation (principally due to energy policies—or lack of same), etc., I am reluctant to go into retirement. Congress could help many retirees if they would rescind the income tax on Social Security. One of the assurances when Social Security was implemented was that it would not be taxed.

DON.

I thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts. Next to the air we breathe and the water we drink, energy is tied to everything in life we do. Our entire economy is centered on affordable energy. As energy increases in cost (far too fast to be able to adjust to) everything else does as well since it is energy that is used for production, delivery, and services. As a nation, we cannot be held hostage to a dependency on other countries who hold major energy reserves that they are willing to exploit and yet keep the majority of their citizens uneducated and living in the stone ages. These foreign energy-controlling countries know that the American way of life and our infrastructure and economy is based on energy and will continue to use energy to gain control over our domestic and foreign politics. We as Americans must not allow ourselves to be dependent on foreign energy sources and not allow ourselves to be held hostage by domestic legal blocks by certain environmental groups who wish to prevent our country from being able to explore and produce our own energy sources. What we need to be able to do is take a step back to the early 60s where John Kennedy was able to spur on an all out effort to put a man on the moon by the end of the decade. We need to approve a measure to take emergency action now to start utilizing our own resources of energy to shift away from foreign dependence and at the same time take major efforts to promote expansion and creation of other resources as alternatives and how to make a gallon of gas go much farther than it does today. We need to stop blocking nuclear power plant creations with years of legal/environmental suits, push for the development of affordable efficient battery cells for electric vehicle conversion. For roughly \$5,000 a small car or truck can be converted to use DC electric but current lead acid cells do not hold enough charge for reasonable distance (limited to approximately 40 miles mile per charge) and are limited to lower speeds of 35–45 mph, making impractical for interstate or longer commutes, and lead acid batteries will only handle a limited number of charge and discharge cycles before needing replacement. I am all for and encourage wind and solar alternatives as well. These alternatives need to be backed and supported by state and federal incentives (tax credits to offset some of the costs) to encourage resident and business use and promote demand so that production costs can be reduced. Prizes have been offered privately to developed space vehicles that can take passengers on joy rides to the edge of space. Our government should be doing the same to encourage development of alternative energy. From a constituent viewpoint, congress and our countries executive administration have been ignoring for too long developing these alternatives. We should have learned from the 1970s implied shortage of oil and effects it had on our economy, but as soon as cheap oil was dumped on the market we became happy and no efforts

have been made to move away from foreign dependence on oil. We as a country did this to ourselves and now have to act immediately to solve our energy issues. This was probably more then you were asking for. How I am personally affected by high fuel prices is no different than others. I cannot afford to fly my aircrafts as often as I use to, or drive to my cabin in Garden Valley as often as I like. The pump is painful and it has impacted my desire to make larger purchases. I am remodeling my home instead of looking to move to a new one. If I were to buy new where I would like to buy to have a large home or lot, it would increase my commute and commute expenses. We eat out less and as people who love to travel, we have three time shares that are going to waste because of the rising cost of airfare. So far we can still feed ourselves but as large company expenses for energy goes up, cut backs will be made in other areas such as employee salary and head count. So rising fuel costs is going to be felt everywhere and on everything.

MICHAEL, *Meridian*.

The question seems to be whether or not the United States needs to drill for our own oil. That seems a no brainer to me. I believe we depend on other countries far too much as it is. It is time we started developing our own method of providing energy without the use of foreign oil. There seems to be an argument that drilling our own oil will not help in the short term. That may be right, but we need to start now so that this development can get underway for the future. If not now, when? We are a nation founded on the principal that we can take care of ourselves and do not need others to make our country self-reliant and strong. The time is now to start to drill for our own oil and if need be to build more refineries to develop it into usable forms. I truly believe if our country does not start taking care of its own energy resources, we will be putting ourselves in jeopardy as a strong independent nation.

Personally, I will have enough gas to get to work and back. However, I will no longer have enough to go visit my 3-week-old grandson and my other family who live 200 miles away. I teach school and even though I am at the top of the pay scale I have to live on a very tight budget. I am waiting to see how this gas increase affects the amount of money I have left to eat on. I am afraid the old adage, "To rob Peter to pay Paul", will be in use shortly. My whole family helps each other financially. I help my son who has a hard time finding a job that pays more than minimum wage. My sisters help their children who also have minimum wage-paying jobs and our parents help all of us. Now that these prices are so high, we will not be able to help each other and who knows what will happen. One of my sisters and I do not even own our own homes, so we do not have the equity of a home to rely on.

There are many other issues I feel strongly about; demanding countries pay us the money they have borrowed, equal taxation for all Americans, minimum wages, the war in Iraq, etc, but those are issues for other communications

Thanks for asking for our input. I hope this input helps convince legislators that we had better start taking care of our middle and lower classes if this nation is to once again be strong, self-reliant, and independent.

KATHY, *Nampa*.

There are six of us living in our house. The recent hike in electrical which may go up again due to the high price of fuel. It has strapped us big time. We are not keeping up as we once were because my wages aren't

going up to compensate for price hikes in food, and services besides the fuel hikes.

I have been vague about actual numbers because of our privacy, but it is still none the less true about not being able to keep up due to everything going up along with the fuel prices, and not the wages. I really do not like government getting involved in this too much. What can we really do as a people to reduce this or better yet stop it?

JIM.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT AND VIRGINIA HOWRIGAN

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today marks the 60th wedding anniversary of Richard and Virginia Howrigan. I am happy to have the opportunity to congratulate my good friends who have given so much to the State of Vermont.

The Howrigans are one of the best-known families in Franklin County; their family name has been synonymous with successful and conscientious dairy farming for decades. Marcelle and I value our friendship with them.

Over the course of the past 60 years, Robert and Virginia have worked and grown together. They are wonderful parents, hard workers, and have always remained true to their faith.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have an excerpt from a February 8, 2009, Burlington Free Press article honoring the Howrigans printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Burlington Free Press, Feb. 8, 2009]

COUPLES SHARE SECRETS OF LOVE, MARRIAGE (By Sally Pollack)

Flowers, chocolates and candlelight dinners mark Valentine's Day. But what marks marriage, day after day, year by year, decade upon decade? The Burlington Free Press asked four couples who together have been married a combined 240 years what it takes to make a marriage work. We'll let the pros do the talking:

VIRGINIA AND ROBERT HOWRIGAN, FAIRFIELD, 60 YEARS

Virginia and Robert Howrigan will celebrate their 60th anniversary Thursday. They are retired farmers who live in Fairfield. The couple worked together on their dairy farm and raised nine children.

Robert Howrigan will turn 90 in May; Virginia is 80. They met at a soda fountain in a St. Albans drugstore, where Virginia scooped ice cream. For the Howrigans, who were married on Lincoln's birthday, Valentine's Day was never a significant event. "Mostly we remember Lincoln," Virginia said.

Robert milked cows the morning the couple were married at a church in St. Albans. The work went on and on: The Howrigans stopped doing farm chores four years ago. Tolerance, patience and perseverance are central to the marriage's longevity, Virginia said.

"You make the best of what you have and keep going," Virginia said. "You get up in the morning and go with the flow. You know what you've got to do. You don't have to look around for work. There's plenty of it everywhere." Robert and Virginia and their children ate all their meals together. Together, the couple talked everything over.

"We were able to keep family together," she said. "All our decisions were joint. We do

our bills together." Robert said two things form the cornerstone of his 60-year marriage: Love and understanding.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING MILLARD FULLER

• Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, this week, Millard Fuller, cofounder of Habitat for Humanity, passed away. Millard Fuller dedicated his life to helping families fulfill the dream of homeownership. Fuller was a selfless entrepreneur who left his fruitful career to start a nonprofit organization that used no-interest loans and "sweat equity" to give low income families the chance to own their own homes. I can tell you from firsthand experience that Fuller made a huge difference in the lives of thousands of American families.

Millard Fuller's efforts didn't stop at our national borders. Indeed, Habitat for Humanity builds homes in partnership with homeowners in virtually every country on the planet.

Fifteen years ago, I was the executive director for Habitat for Humanity in Portland, OR. Helping build homes for those who couldn't otherwise afford them provides stability and gives families confidence.

I saw in the faces of the Habitat family members how much it meant to own their own homes. These homes were also important to the children. I remember one family with two young daughters who were so excited to be able to have their friends over for the very first time in their lives.

Millard Fuller will be missed, but his legacy and organization will live on. I know that I join hundreds of thousands of families in being so appreciative for everything Fuller has done for so many hardworking Americans and for our country. ●

HONORING BANGOR FLORAL COMPANY

• Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, this Saturday, we celebrate Valentine's Day, when couples across the world take a moment to slow down and show each other their appreciation and love. Along with "Be My Valentine" cards and boxes of chocolate, one of the symbols most connected with this special day is a beautiful bouquet of red roses. With that in mind, I rise to recognize a small florist in my home State of Maine that continually provides customers with quality flowers and gifts—and at this time of year, makes Valentine's Day a sweet event.

Bangor Floral Company, founded in 1925, is a historic floral shop located in downtown Bangor. Housed in a converted, turn-of-the-century church, Bangor Floral prides itself on fresh flowers, creative arrangements, and responsive customer service. From red and pastel roses, to bright lilies, chrysanthemums, and snapdragons, Bangor

Floral expertly prepares beautiful bouquets for any occasion. Bangor Floral also organizes a variety of fresh fruit baskets and gift baskets that include cookies, candies, stuffed animals, and balloons. To keep his flowers fresh, Phil Frederick, owner of Bangor Floral Company, purchases his flowers locally whenever possible, and does not pass any additional costs onto the customer. Mr. Frederick, a third generation florist, also offers his clients a 50 percent discount off all cut flowers from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. each afternoon, fashioning this sale a "happy hour."

Around Valentine's Day, Mr. Frederick engages in a creative and humorous television and radio advertising campaign for his flowers that residents from across the region will recognize. In his television ad, Mr. Frederick dresses as a doctor and carries a stethoscope, calling himself "Doctor Valentine." The popular ad has run in the Bangor area for several years, bringing smiles to the faces of his customers and increasing Mr. Frederick's sales.

Mr. Frederick is also very committed to the local community. A member of the Bangor Rotary Club, Mr. Frederick gives flowers to fellow Rotarians for their birthdays. He also donates flowers to various organizations across Bangor for fundraising purposes. Mr. Frederick is currently president of the Husson Alumni Board, as well as a board member of the Oncology Support Foundation, which provides resources and information to cancer patients and their families throughout Maine. The latter is a cause near and dear to Mr. Frederick, who is a cancer survivor himself. Additionally, the Bangor Rotary Club has honored Mr. Frederick by naming him a Paul Harris Fellow, as someone who has truly exhibited the creed of "service above self" in his everyday life.

In the era of online and telephone-based florists, Bangor Floral Company allows customers the opportunity to see and discuss the proper arrangement, and to truly "smell the roses." My sincerest thanks to Phil Frederick for all of his generous efforts, and my best wishes to everyone at Bangor Floral for a pleasant Valentine's season and a successful year. ●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mrs. Neiman, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:03 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 632. An act to encourage, enhance, and integrate Silver Alert plans throughout the United States, to authorize grants for the assistance of organizations to find missing adults, and for other purposes.

H.R. 908. An act to amend the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 to reauthorize the Missing Alzheimer's Disease Patient Alert Program.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 41. Concurrent resolution providing for a joint session of Congress to receive a message from the President.

The message further announced that the House disagrees to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1) making supplemental appropriations for job preservation and creation, infrastructure investment, energy efficiency and science, assistance to the unemployed, and State and local fiscal stabilization, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2009, and for other purposes, and agrees to the conference asked by the Senate on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and appoints the following as managers of the conference on the part of the House: Mr. OBEY, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. LEWIS of California, and Mr. CAMP of Michigan.

At 4:07 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 47. Concurrent resolution providing for a conditional adjournment of the House of Representatives and a conditional recess or adjournment of the Senate.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 11. To amend title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, and to modify the operation of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, to clarify that a discriminatory compensation decision or other practice that is unlawful under such Acts occurs each time compensation is paid pursuant to the discriminatory compensation decision or other practice, to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide more effective remedies to victims of discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of sex, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

H.R. 632. An act to encourage, enhance, and integrate Silver Alert plans throughout the United States, to authorize grants for the assistance of organizations to find missing adults, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 908. An act to amend the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of