

banks, we involve ourselves in the selfless and kindhearted spirit that defines the American people. The role of eye donors is paramount in assisting those who have tragically lost the ability to see.

Mr. President, lawmakers have recognized March as National Eye Donor Month since President Reagan proclaimed the first one in 1983 and I am honored on behalf of the residents of Georgia and those throughout the country to recognize March as National Eye Donor Month.

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 well over 1,200, are heartbreaking and touching. While energy prices have dropped in recent weeks, the concerns expressed remain very relevant. To respect the efforts of those who took the opportunity to share their thoughts, I am submitting every e-mail sent to me through an address set up specifically 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:

My fiancé and I bought a home in Caldwell in May and we moved out of his parents' home. While living with his parents, we paid rent and part of the bills. We knew, when we moved, we would be fine. Unlike many people, we know how to live within our means and stay below that mark in case of an emergency—like the cost of gas increasing at such an astronomical rate. His parents are a different story. They are in the group that overextended themselves, got the big house loan that any banker with common sense should have said no to but gave them the loan anyway with an adjustable rate. At the time, we knew if they gave up a couple of things (like cable tv) they would make ends meet. That is far from the truth now. In just a couple of months, gas has gone up and affected every end of life. Food is now more expensive. Other items like shampoo, cleaners, clothing, and medications have increased too with no end in sight. Even if they gave up the cable tv, drinking, smoking and anything extra, they can barely make it now. Sometimes I feel guilty for moving out and trying to create our own household and family. A child should be able to move out, make it with a supposedly 'living wage job' (which is rare and far in-between in the state of Idaho) and not have to either run back to the parents because the economy has sunk to the black hole of doom or have the parents move in with them because they are not capable of supporting themselves in the same economy.

Congress needs to stop bickering and aggravating each other and be adults—work together; otherwise those states they are supposedly working for are going to crash and burn. I know it is an election year and each party is trying to get their person elected. I also know the economy goes into a dive during said election year due to uncertainty about the next president and possible outcome of policies and bills. I am all for increasing domestic oil production if regulations are put in affect to help 'guide' the sales and thus restricting gas and fuel from skyrocketing like it is. OPEC said it would increase production yet oil futures increase on the stock markets. This is getting out of hand and a small group of people are profiting greatly while draining the hard earned money from everyone. It will backfire and it will not be pretty. Instead of fighting with the oil companies, tell them fine, thanks for all the fish. Get new technology and alternative fuel sources reved up. Stop the oil companies from bullying smaller companies from developing new fuel sources. Take the tax breaks from the oil companies and give them to the companies who have proven examples of alternative fuels and technology to work with said alternative fuels. Give people who do not own one of those massive Hummers or SUVs a tax break. Because those who bought the massive Hummers and SUVs did not help the situation and they knew it. I know it is unfair, but punishing those who used common sense and chose the practical Ford Fusion over the Hummer because they thought and realized that the Hummer was overkill on the road is unfair too. I would say we need more public transportation, but Idaho is not 'public transportation' friendly. What works in Seattle and Portland would be a cosmic joke in this state. Our communities are spread out to the point a public transportation system would only work with the Star Trek shuttles or transporter. In other words, it is not realistic. These are just my opinions and a small drop of concern in a huge lake.

KRISTA.

The price of gasoline is the cause of my debt going up. With a family of 5, it is hard to cut back anymore than I already have. My wife and I use our vehicles less than we have in the past, but we still are finding it hard to make ends meet due to the fact that when the price of gasoline goes up so does the price of food, clothes, electricity, and many other everyday necessities.

For a solution I cannot understand why the only car company (that I know of) making a natural gas-fueled car is Honda (Honda GX) and the only hydrogen car (that I know of) is made by Honda (Honda FCX). I believe if there were easy access to natural gas stations and easy access to hydrogen fuel stations that the cost of the natural gas car and the hydrogen car would be equal to the price that gasoline-powered cars are. I keep hearing about how we need to start drilling offshore for oil, but if we would use vehicles not powered by gasoline, we would not need to do any offshore drilling. I am sure there are inventors out there with ideas for cars powered by something other than gasoline, besides the natural gas and hydrogen, that are not being given the opportunity to mass market their ideas. It looks to me like we have chosen to be dependent on oil and that car companies refuse to look for alternatives to gasoline powered cars. Honda may be making the alternative fuel cars, but they are not making the cars available to the masses, although Honda does not build hydrogen or natural gas gas stations. Without easy access to the fuel need for the hydrogen, natural gas, and even the electric car then you are not truly giving the consumer

the opportunity to choose any car powered by anything but gasoline.

Thanks for your time.

JEFF.

I applaud your efforts to communicate with Idahoans in an effort to gain an understanding of what we see on a daily basis. Perhaps there are some politicians that still want to feel the pulse of those who elect them. I am not an Idaho resident, but spent most of my 30 years growing up and living in the state. I now reside in Washington and more specifically in the northern Puget Sound system.

When the increase in fuel prices became more than I could justify I was faced with a decision to use our mass transit system. I could not be more pleased with the level of service offered. In comparison, many local areas in Southern Idaho do not have a public transportation system that carries a similar weight. With the increase in traffic in the treasure valley one would think that a mass transit system would be a logical solution. It benefits both economically and environmentally make it a decision I believe is a must. What future planning is in the works to create a suitable mass transit system that would be utilized if any? I encourage the use of a committee to explore more efforts for carpooling, expanded bus systems, and light rail for a county connect system. If you want to see a system that works, check out Seattle, I believe we offer a very good solution for transportation all around this region.

I encourage your continuing goal of thinking outside the box for solutions to meeting the ever increasing energy crisis facing Idaho. This should be a task all politicians should be working together on.

Warm regards,

NATE, *Marysville WA.*

I do appreciate the opportunity to "sound off" on the energy issue. I am of the belief that Congress has been delinquent in its responsibility to the United States citizens. I agree that we need to work hard on sources of energy that are less harmful to our environment; however, in the short run, we need to provide for our needs.

I am not aware of any solution that will provide immediate relief to the price of gasoline and diesel; however, it will not get any better by talking about it for another 5 years. If we had faced the problem 10 years ago, we would not have the problem today.

We need to drill now and we need to do it everywhere there are known deposits of oil. We need to be good stewards of the land in the process (we do know how to do that) but we need to provide for our own domestic needs.

Oil is a commodity, and like all commodities, the price will fall as the supply increases. Whether it is Alaska, off shore or the Rocky Mountain Shale oil, I believe we need to pursue the development of these deposits, and the construction of sufficient pipelines and refineries to deliver the products to our citizens.

Thank you again for your request for input. I look forward to seeing the Senate and House take positive long term steps for the "every day" citizens of our nation.

PETE, *Ontario, Oregon.*

Not too long ago (2½ years), I remember buying gasoline for less than \$2 a gallon. I drive a Honda Civic and also have a Dodge Dakota that I use during the winter months when four-wheel drive is needed to get up and down my mountain road. I put the most miles on my Honda by far.

Buying gasoline at \$4 a gallon has now become a major monthly expense, requiring me to cut back spending in other areas such as

eating out, vacations, purchasing household goods and home improvements. While it is easy to blame the oil companies, I do not feel that is fair. I believe a combination of environmentalists, the media and [the] global warming myth are more to blame. 31,000 scientists have gone on the record to debunk the global warming myth yet it is still very much alive in the media and being crammed into grade school children's minds. The EPA has forced oil companies to produce something like 19 different grades of unleaded gas. This is ludicrous.

There is no significant manmade global warming. There has not been any in the past, there is none now and there is no reason to fear any in the future. The climate of Earth is changing. It has always changed. But mankind's activities have not overwhelmed or significantly modified the natural forces. I believe there is a direct connection between global warming and four dollar a gallon gas. Ethanol is not the answer—it is just screwing up our food supply chain.

ANTHONY, *Sandpoint.*

Energy costs have resulted in our doing without or not going to some of the places we use to frequent. My wife and I are on Social Security and therefore have a set income. We are just not able to buy food and buy fuel for our vehicles. We are hoping Congress will do the common sense thing and "drill here, drill now and pay less". They simply must stop catering to the environmentalists and do what is right for America. As a senior member of the United States Senate, we are asking you to not only do the things you say you are going to do for the people of Idaho but be a leader and get the Senate back to Conservatism.

JERRY and TEDDI, *Homedale.*

I was born and raised in Idaho and I live here still. It is amazing how this state has changed in just the last 10 years.

The cost of fuel is insane. Raising the prices is not going to replenish the world's natural resources. We need to utilize the wind that blows nearly constantly through our state, we need to open more ethanol plants in Idaho and ship that fuel within Idaho. We need to give tax breaks to people who add solar power to their homes/businesses. All government buildings need to be solar powered.

The only way people are going to slow the destruction of our planet is by changing to using hydro power, wind power, solar power.

My family has resorted to sharing hot water to bathe and not using the air conditioning unless absolutely necessary. We have begun to ride bicycles to the grocery store to pick up milk and bread because the fuel is too precious for a small trip for the ever-necessary milk.

Idaho needs more 5 lane roads to get across the Treasure Valley. Idaho needs better public transit. Idaho needs a passenger train with stops from Caldwell, to Nampa, Kuna, Star, Eagle, Meridian, Boise * * * and numerous stops in each of those towns. Imagine with me for a moment * * * a train system with branches and stops criss-crossing the Treasure Valley, and then public buses with routes that cover the areas that the train cannot go. You, Senator, could take the train to a bus stop and catch a bus to the Statehouse! Just think about the jobs that the buses would create, and the trains * * * the traffic would be lighter on the interstate.

Treasure Valley also needs a belt route that take big trucks out of the way. A route that starts south of Eiseman Rd and travels west but stays south of Kuna and then heads north to reconnect with I84 west of Caldwell. That would make I84 through Ada and Canyon county safer to travel and again reducing tons of congestion and traffic.

These are dreams that only you and your fellow elected officials can make a reality! We voted for you so that you will hear the voice of the people and do what we ask. You are there working for the people that voted for you. Make a difference. Make Idaho a self-sufficient, self-reliant state.

S.L.

I am an independent small business owner. Since my profit margins are tiny the high price of gas and diesel are causing me to consider closing my business.

Drill here, drill now, build refineries now. Build nuclear power plants now.

VAL, *Council.*

I think it is about time that Americans became aware of their energy usage and excessive waste of a limited resource. We should have been paying high fuel prices for many years with a tax being used for research and support of alternative technologies. Enhanced domestic production and expanded refinery capacity is not the answer to a long term problem.

BILL, *Hailey.*

Please do not vote in favor of lifting the offshore drilling ban nor in favor of drilling in any wildlife refuge. Supply is not the problem in this price run-up. New drilling will only benefit those in a position to profit from the further exclusive use of petroleum, not the average consumer.

We cannot undevelop wildlife areas, and it is impossible to unspill oil. I grew up on the California coast, where offshore drilling was underway. Certain beaches were continually contaminated. We had to use, ironically, gasoline to get the oil off our feet at the end of the day.

Again, please do not vote in favor of further drilling. Please do encourage development of alternatives to petroleum. Thank you.

NANCY, *Boise.*

What I cannot understand is why our government is so blind to how the price of fuel is affecting all of America. And still the big oil companies are making huge profits, actually obscene profits. I know their stockholders want to make a profit—but at the expense of the entire economy?

Can you name one thing that you get that does not come by truck? The airlines are dropping like flies. The average driver can hardly afford to drive to work and essential places, let alone extra driving. Cannot you see how this is a huge hurt to the American family?

KATHIE, *Melba.*

BUDGET OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2009—PM 9

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred jointly, pursuant to the order of January 30, 1975 as modified by the order of April 11, 1986; to the Committees on the Budget; and Appropriations:

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Throughout America's history, there have been some years that appeared to roll into the next without much notice or fanfare. Budgets are proposed that offer some new programs or eliminate an initiative, but by and large continuity reigns.

Then there are the years that come along once in a generation, when we look at where the country has been and recognize that we need a break from a troubled past, that the problems we face demand that we begin charting a new path. This is one of those years.

We start 2009 in the midst of a crisis unlike any we have seen in our lifetimes. Our economy is in a deep recession that threatens to be deeper and longer than any since the Great Depression. More than three and a half million jobs were lost over the past 13 months, more jobs than at any time since World War II. In addition, another 8.8 million Americans who want and need full-time work have had to settle for part-time jobs. Manufacturing employment has hit a 60-year low. Our capital markets are virtually frozen, making it difficult for businesses to grow and for families to borrow money to afford a home, car, or college education for their kids. Many families cannot pay their bills or their mortgage payments. Trillions of dollars of wealth have been wiped out, leaving many workers with little or nothing as they approach retirement. And millions of Americans are unsure about the future—if their job will be there tomorrow, if their children will be able to go to college, and if their grandchildren will be able to realize the full promise of America.

This crisis is neither the result of a normal turn of the business cycle nor an accident of history. We arrived at this point as a result of an era of profound irresponsibility that engulfed both private and public institutions from some of our largest companies' executive suites to the seats of power in Washington, D.C. For decades, too many on Wall Street threw caution to the wind, chased profits with blind optimism and little regard for serious risks—and with even less regard for the public good. Lenders made loans without concern for whether borrowers could repay them. Inadequately informed of the risks and overwhelmed by fine print, many borrowers took on debt they could not really afford. And those in authority turned a blind eye to this risk-taking; they forgot that markets work best when there is transparency and accountability and when the rules of the road are both fair and vigorously enforced. For years, a lack of transparency created a situation in which serious economic dangers were visible to all too few.

This irresponsibility precipitated the interlocking housing and financial crises that triggered this recession. But the roots of the problems we face run deeper. Government has failed to fully confront the deep, systemic problems that year after year have only become a larger and larger drag on our economy. From the rising costs of health care to the state of our schools, from the need to revolutionize how we power our economy to our crumbling infrastructure, policymakers in Washington