

household. It is hitting us hard, my husband works construction and is not getting the hours that he got last year so we are on a lower budget than ever. We used to do a little traveling, not far but weekend trips to livestock shows and to see friends, but now a trip to the grocery store is about all we get to do. No quick trips to the store, if we need something it waits until we have a good list. We used to eat out a couple times a week since we both work, and that does not happen often either anymore. We have sold all but a handful of our animals (South African Meat Goats and dairy goats) due to what the feed increases are.

The other thing that is amazing to us is that, in 1991, when we bought a Geo Metro, it got 60 mpg easily. Why is it that the manufacturers cannot do that now unless it is a "hybrid". If they could do it 17 year ago, what is the problem now? This is just my 2 cents.

LAURI, *Blackfoot.*

Thank you for asking for our input. The energy crisis is hitting our family particularly hard because of the slowdown in the economy. I am a self-employed architect, and, though we had a good year last year, the slowdown has brought our firm to a standstill. I share this because as the fuel prices rise, they affect every sector of our economy. Because our work has decreased, this means even more money needs to go to higher fuel and utility costs, money which we do not have right now.

I suggest that instead of Congress blaming the President for not having an energy policy that they look themselves in the mirror and ask themselves why they continue to vote in such a way that keeps us in bondage to oil from overseas. If Congress could address this one issue in a unified manner, maybe then their job approval rating would not be lower than the President's job approval rating as it is right now.

The bottom line is this: we must become energy independent from countries that support terrorism and are not in the best interests of the US. This means increasing US Oil drilling, production, refining, distribution, and increasing our research (working with Oil companies) to create alternatives to oil to run our country: such as hydrogen fuel cells, electric hybrids, etc. We must be able to drill in ANWR, oil shale in Colorado, Utah, and North Dakota; oil in Wyoming, oil in the Gulf, etc. At the same time, we need to transition out of using oil into other energy sources: nuclear, etc. No decision now is still making the decision to procrastinate. Procrastination is not an option.

BRIAN, *Boise.*

As an average American citizen making just under \$30,000 a year, skyrocketing gas prices are hurting the pocketbook. A full tank of gas is costing around \$55, which is just crazy to think. It is hard to imagine that just ten years ago gas prices in the state of Idaho averaged \$.96 a gallon. With a recession looming, the dollar growing weaker by the day, and unemployment rates on the rise it is a scary time for America. One solution that I can see to help with the gas prices is by suspending all sales of oil on the futures market. It is evident that forecasts by the speculators are driving the prices sky high. While investors are making money on these hedge fund investments, millions of Americans are suffering from paying these high prices. My solution would be to suspend all oil sales on the futures market for 3 to 6 months just to see what effect it would have. I believe it is the speculators that are driving the prices with their forecasting of a bad hurricane season or low supply of oil available they are the ones that are the problem.

They are the reason for the high prices of oil. By suspending the sale of oil on the futures market this would take them out of the equation and hopefully stabilize the prices. Even by just setting a limit on prices of oil sales per barrel would help stabilize the high prices of gasoline. Overall this is just another example of the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer.

KENNETH.

I appreciate the opportunity to share how fuel prices are impacting our family. We are one of the many that own a diesel truck and have been impacted in a very big way. We purchased our diesel in the summer of 2005 and the price of fuel was \$2.11/gal and, as you know, today it is \$4.85/gal. That is a 130% increase in the cost of fuel! And to further compound the increase in cost, tighter emissions restrictions have been implemented. When we purchased our truck we were able to get 23 mpg and now that the ultra low sulfur fuel has been mandated our economy has dropped to 17 mpg. That is a 26% reduction in economy. As an engineer, I have a difficult time seeing the reasoning behind reducing the pollutants per gallon to only decrease mileage which ultimately increase the amount of pollutant per mile driven. This is very apparent on the new diesel trucks which are struggling to get 12 mph because of the emission controls. I have to ask the question is more than a 50% reduction in pollutants to justify the 50% reduction in economy. There is something that could be done right now and that is to relax the emission on diesel fuel so many families and the trucking industry would get an immediate increase in economy. We saw this during Katrina when the restrictions were lifted, our economy went back up to 23 mpg. Americans would see this relief immediately.

Our family has taken many measures to help offset the cost of the increasing fuel prices. We have basically parked our truck and become a one car family. We cancelled our kids swimming lessons and our spring/summer outdoor activities (camping, fishing, and hunting) to reduce the cost of fuel. In addition to limiting our driving we have stopped eating out (fast food and sit down) and other non-essential activities. We are fortunate to have planned extra budget for unaccounted costs, however, the increase fuel costs have taken all the extra and we as a family are extremely concerned that Congress is unwilling to act and make the difficult choice.

What has to happen to have Congress understand the simple principle of supply and demand? I, like many Americans, would like to be able to use a cleaner energy source but, until one is viable with a sound delivery network in place, we have to use the one we have and that is oil. And with the world's political climate, we also strongly believe it is a matter of national security to become less dependent on others for oil.

We strongly support expanding oil exploration and production in the United States. We also strongly support drilling in protected areas of Alaska. We agree with Ted Stevens when he points out that we as Americans would have that million barrels a day right now if President Clinton would not have vetoed the bill. People that are against drilling in Alaska simply do not understand how little an impact is has on the area. I challenge any person to visit the North Slope and see the operations there and see how exploration is done with little to no impacts with ice roads and the modern techniques. As an Idaho family, we strongly support all measures that will increase the domestic supply of oil. Thank you for your hard work in this effort.

CORTNEY and LORI, *Star.*

You asked for a line or two as to how the energy expenses have affected our lives. Certainly via the pocketbook, but equally in lifestyle and choices we make. I have reached a time in my life that I wanted to see some of our country that I have not yet been privileged to see. I wanted to drive across Montana and see the Big Horn Battlefield and on to the Black Hills. Drop into Nebraska to see family, then who knows where we ended up. Not now. I cannot afford to spend a thousand dollars or more on fuel. I realize that there are new automobiles that are more fuel efficient, only \$20,000-\$30,000+ but if we find ourselves upside down now on a Ford F150 truck that gets 15-18 MPG and nobody wants to buy it because it cannot get 30+ MPG you adjust. Trips now will consist of short radius excursions. Long distance is out. Such ventures are not economically possible. Fuel expense as a percentage of my income has risen notably. The more affluent folks can fill their tanks and shake it off. Some of us feel more than a pinch.

We also are associated with property under the current CRP program in Power County. Once CRP is removed and the land is resolved to be put into production it will take 3-4 years to prepare the ground for planting. All with no return income in return. Dry land farming has never been a high profit endeavor, but with the expense of the machinery and the 100+% increase in fuel, the small farmer will undoubtedly be out of business—out of business being the operative phrase here.

I worry for our country if we are indeed slaves to foreign oil and big money refuses to allow a phase-out. We are not a nation of sheep, or are we? We have the technology to fuel our autos using water for crying out loud. Why is not this technology in use? Who is stopping it from becoming an affordable reality? I have asked such questions before of our representatives and have never received a response. Maybe you could be the first. Thanks for listening.

DAN, *Idaho Falls.*

Unfortunately our family has had to cancel our vacation and any other fishing trips this year. In fact, we will not venture out to any of Idaho's beautiful cities this summer. The cost of fuel and food and our daughter's education have us questioning if we will be able to make ends meet. New technology for transportation will come too late for most working citizens. That is why we need to drill for oil now before the platforms have other countries flags flying.

RANDY.

The story is the failure of Congress to act in the interest of the American public. Congress continually is bowing to the environmentalist (how they became the majority is beyond me). The current gas price just shows another failure of government. There is an old saying "Lead, follow or get out of the way"—[it seems like our country is failing on all three.]

When you sit down at dinner tonight, think about the 85-year-old couple who retired 20 years ago and are drawing Social Security in the amount of \$980 month. How would you put food on the table, pay for health care, housing, transportation and enjoy your golden years. The story is the failure of Congress to act beyond personal interest.

DEAN.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO BETSY J. KEELING

• Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I am pleased to ask my colleagues to join

me in recognizing Ms. Betsy J. Keeling as she retires after nearly 32 years of Federal service, which included working for 6 years in the U.S. Senate. Her dedicated public service and tireless commitment to keeping appropriate congressional committees fully and currently informed of the activities of her agency should be recognized and appreciated by all in this Chamber.

A native of Nashville, TN, Ms. Keeling graduated from the University of Tennessee in 1977. She then joined the staff of our esteemed former majority leader, Senator Howard Baker of Tennessee, in June of 1977, where she served as an office manager, formulating the Senator's office budget and supervising 30 full-time employees with a variety of responsibilities.

In August of 1983 she joined the office of Commissioner Frederick Bernthal of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, NRC. As his administrative assistant, she handled all day-to-day operations of the office and managed work flow within the Commissioner's office.

At the end of Commissioner Bernthal's term in June of 1988, Ms. Keeling joined the staff of NRC's Office of Congressional Affairs. She served as a congressional affairs officer for almost 12 years and was then promoted to senior congressional affairs officer in 2000. She served in that capacity until September of 2005. As a senior congressional affairs officer, she assisted in formulating congressional relations policy and programs, performed liaison duties, analyzed legislation and coordinated congressional briefings and hearings.

Ms. Keeling was recognized for her outstanding service by the NRC with a Meritorious Service Award, the agency's second-highest award given to its employees, in 2003. She received this award "in recognition of her exceptional versatility, dedicated service, and adroit handling of Congressional affairs." Ms. Keeling was also the recipient of numerous performance and special achievement awards throughout her career at the NRC.

In September 2005, Ms. Keeling was appointed associate director for congressional affairs in NRC's Office of Congressional Affairs. She has been in this position since that time and it is from this position that Ms. Keeling retired from Federal service on February 27, 2009. She will be returning to her beloved State of Tennessee to be with her family and friends in Nashville.

Mr. President, I am pleased to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Ms. Keeling on her retirement and thanking her for her service to the U.S. Senate and her country through her work at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. ●

MEASURES DISCHARGED

The following measure was discharged from the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pen-

sions by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

S. 473. A bill to establish the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Foundation; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. LEVIN (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mrs. McCASKILL, and Mr. NELSON of Florida):

S. 506. A bill to restrict the use of offshore tax havens and abusive tax shelters to inappropriately avoid Federal taxation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. AKAKA (for himself, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. INOUE, and Mr. BEGICH):

S. 507. A bill to provide for retirement equity for Federal employees in nonforeign areas outside the 48 contiguous States and the District of Columbia, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. ENSIGN (for himself and Mr. REID):

S. 508. A bill to provide for the conveyance of certain Bureau of Land Management land in the State of Nevada to the Las Vegas Motor Speedway, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mrs. MURRAY:

S. 509. A bill to authorize a major medical facility project at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Walla Walla, Washington, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. DODD, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BURRIS, and Mr. PRYOR):

S.J. Res. 12. A joint resolution proclaiming Casimir Pulaski to be an honorary citizen of the United States posthumously; considered and passed.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Mr. VOINOVICH):

S. Res. 60. A resolution commemorating the 10-year anniversary of the accession of the Czech Republic, the Republic of Hungary, and the Republic of Poland as members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. VOINOVICH (for himself and Mr. BROWN):

S. Res. 61. A resolution commending the Columbus Crew Major League Soccer Team for winning the 2008 Major League Soccer Cup; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CASEY (for himself, Ms. SNOWE, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. SANDERS, and Mr. DORGAN):

S. Con. Res. 9. A concurrent resolution supporting the goals and ideals of Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 144

At the request of Mr. KERRY, the name of the Senator from Pennsyl-

vania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 144, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to remove cell phones from listed property under section 280F.

S. 182

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 182, a bill 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.

S. 254

At the request of Mrs. LINCOLN, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. INOUE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 254, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the coverage of home infusion therapy under the Medicare Program.

S. 277

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 277, a bill to amend the National and Community Service Act of 1990 to expand and improve opportunities for service, and for other purposes.

S. 388

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 388, a bill to extend the termination date for the exemption of returning workers from the numerical limitations for temporary workers.

S. 428

At the request of Mr. DORGAN, the names of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) and the Senator from Montana (Mr. BAUCUS) were added as cosponsors of S. 428, a bill to allow travel between the United States and Cuba.

S. 456

At the request of Mr. DODD, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 456, a bill to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, to develop guidelines to be used on a voluntary basis to develop plans to manage the risk of food allergy and anaphylaxis in schools and early childhood education programs, to establish school-based food allergy management grants, and for other purposes.

S. 473

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VOINOVICH), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD) were added as cosponsors of S. 473, a bill to establish the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Foundation.

S. 484

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 484, a bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to repeal the Government pension offset and windfall elimination provisions.