

nearest large town is Pocatello, which is 100 miles from us. Ogden, Utah, is 80 miles and Brigham and Logan, Utah, are 60 miles away. Needless to say we must travel quite a distance to get the things we need. There are some times we must take the truck and this takes a lot of gas. The high price of gas is just killing us financially. Just the last two days we had to spend \$100 for fuel just to move our cattle from one field to another. We have cut down our trips and that is pretty hard to do when we really need something. There are trips to the Dr. and we always have pills that need to be refilled.

My husband has worked very hard all his life to provide a good living for our family. We have tried to prepare for the future so we would not be a burden on our children or have to live off the government. Our retirement is in a 401K in the market and we are losing money every day. We are getting old with no source of income and I will tell you it is pretty frightening.

Everything in our economy is tied to oil and energy prices. I think it is only fair to ask our Congress to act responsibly and get doing something now!

The statistics I hear say we only use 15% of the oil resources that are available right here in our own country. I have heard politicians say it won't do any good to drill because we won't see any results for such a long time. It does not take a genius to realize that if we don't start doing something now we will never get the relief we need.

I think we could start by doing something about those silly regulations that prevent us from doing so many sensible things.

I think we should be allowed to drill for oil and explore for energy resources right here where we live. I think it can be done responsibly if our hands are not tied with ridiculous regulations. I also think we could start building new refineries. I agree that we should explore and expand alternative energy sources, including nuclear. What about Iraq? We have done a lot for them why can't we get oil from them?

The thing that I think is totally irresponsible is to tax the oil companies and to put global warming nonsense before the needs of human beings.

It has always been my philosophy that doing something productive is better than setting on our hands and doing nothing. I say to the congress roll up your sleeves and get to work doing something worthwhile.

I would like to thank you for all the service and many hours you have spent in behalf of all of us in Idaho. I am grateful to have you for my Senator.

LOUISE, *Stone.*

I am a single parent trying to live on disability, a low fixed income. The current price of gas has affected me severely. I live two and a half hours one way from my doctors in Boise and I must make three to four trips a month. I do not have the resources to relocate or carry on like this.

These are a few things that I think have lead to the high price of fuel in the U.S. Until recently, all energy futures trading in the U.S. took place on the New York Mercantile Exchange, which traditionally determined the market price of crude oil and natural gas commodities bought and sold here in the United States. Recently a large portion of the futures exchange was moved to London England where they could operate outside of the regulated exchange markets. Since this took place it has driven the price of crude up dramatically, by investors with little or no assets investing in the future price of crude by putting up a fraction of the outright value of the crude oil they are investing in. The basic facts are clear—this market is purely and simply being controlled by over-speculation."

In 2000, at the urging of Enron and other large energy traders, a provision was slipped into an omnibus bill conference report that eliminated CFTC oversight of energy commodities traded by large companies outside of the regulated exchanges. This so-called Enron loophole has severely restricted CFTC oversight of energy trading. Supply and demand = There has not been a new refinery built in the US in over 30 years. We have more oil here in the US than in all of the Middle East if you take into consideration The shale in the Rocky Mountains, the oil in ANWR Alaska and off our coast.

All four of these things must be done to drive the price of fuel down in the U.S.

1. Remove this loophole for energy futures traders.

2. Change the amount of money put up front by investors in the futures trade energy market to 50%.

3. Allow drilling at ANWR in Alaska, off our coastlines and also allow the extraction of oil from Rocky Mountain shale.

4. Streamline the process for building new refineries (cracking plants) in the U.S.

Your help is needed and appreciated.

MARK, *Council.*

Thank you for notifying me that you are trying to do something about the gas prices. My husband and I are retired, but we had no retirement to fall back on. Now we live on Social Security. Our needs are not great, but the increased gas prices and the resulting increased food prices are dealing us a severe blow. We now drive to the grocery store and to church and almost nowhere else. I have also cut down on the groceries that I buy. We have even decided to cut way down on our evening meal so that we do not have to buy so much food. Any help you can give us and people in the US like us will be so appreciated. I know being a Congressman is not an easy job. I do thank you for working for the citizens of Idaho and the United States.

KAREN, *Coeur d'Alene.*

The price of heating oil has quadrupled since installing our heater. We left wood because of injuries not allowing either one of us to get the wood, split, or even get it into the stove. We are worried about being able to have any this coming winter.

Our use of our boat—the only recreation that we have. The boat does not use much fuel, about 2 gallons a day out on the lake fishing. But we cannot get the boat to the lake. It takes a rig to do that, and the rig only gets 24 miles per gallon. And to make it worse, we are only 25 miles from the lake or 9 miles to the Clearwater River! We have to worry about heat this winter. So no recreation.

I work 15 miles from home. I have a car that gets 35 plus miles per gallon. I only earn \$6.25 per hour. At present gas is \$3.99 a gallon. It eats into any profits I might have. Any higher and I will be forced to quit.

I know a girl who no longer can work there. She had a baby. The cost of child care and fuel was more than her wages. So she is on food stamps much to her dismay.

This right-to-work state with its low wages. It takes 3/4 of an hour to earn a gallon of milk! And the rest of the groceries go up every delivery of foods. Because of fuel costs.

A lot of people, not only in this state, are in the same boat. Some are having to give up jobs. Some are having to close their businesses. Some are giving up their homes. It hurts more out here in the real world than it does in the beltway. The whole economy is going down the tubes all because the price of energy.

The argument that it is only \$50 or so per month more. Well...then there is the add-on for food, and everything else. And on a fixed

income, with a low wage job to supplement. That is a lot.

I will add another thing. The summer mix for the fuel cuts the gas mileage. How's that one!! for a stupid regulation?

And you can bet your boots, if all those foreign countries and speculators thought we were really going to drill our own oil, the prices would drop like a rock. Drill for oil along with all the other things. Build nuclear, build my hydropower systems. Do it al. Open all the oil potential fields. Make our country totally self sufficient. Get away from the dictators!

KAREN, *Juliaetta.*

My family (Dad and four brothers) owns a roofing business here in Boise. The high fuel prices have made it difficult for us to make a profit. The price of materials has increased every month for the past three months and some say that they will increase by 30-40% before the end of the summer. I see this as a direct result of the price of fuel. The construction industry in Idaho has taken some hits and I don't think that Idahoans can really afford for the price of home production to increase. Especially when you consider how many houses are currently on the market and how many people are facing foreclosure.

America is the best country in the world. I think that our dependence on foreign oil is the pinnacle of stupidity. We have the resources, the technology and the manpower to become energy dependent without hurting the environment. Capitalism is the way to ensure that America will remain the best country in the world. Please do your part to help us become energy independent by letting us drill in our own country and use our own resources without taxing the oil companies and nationalizing energy production.

Idaho is the greatest state in America; I love it. It is beautiful and I would like to share that beauty with my kids someday without having to sell my house in order to pay for the gas that it cost to drive around this great state. Thanks for the great work!

VICTOR, *Boise.*

I would like to tell you my story regarding the energy prices, not only has our family been impacted by the cost of fuel, but it has also been impacted by the loss of income. I am a single parent, and up until a year ago had an income of \$35-38K a year. The only work I am able to find is part-time employment for minimum wage. (I have too much experience for the jobs posted.) Add that to the continuous increasing fuel prices and the harder I try to get ahead and to make ends meet the more behind I get. The stimulus check I received, because of the high cost of fuel, went to bills and groceries rather than into the economy as I would have enjoyed. I am constantly "robbing Peter to pay Paul" within my budget. I have to have a vehicle, which requires gasoline, to get to work. With the cost of gas equaling an hour of net income, it takes the biggest percentage after my mortgage/rent payment.

If possible, relief at the pump would be greatly appreciated. I know I am not the only who has a limited income and is struggling financially.

LORI, *Garden City.*

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REUNION OF THE MUSICAL GROUP PHISH

● Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to give recognition to an event taking

place in Hampton, VA, beginning tonight, March 6. This weekend, Vermont's own musical group, Phish, will celebrate a reunion not far from our Nation's Capitol, following their retirement in August of 2004. Phish's fans, and all Vermonters, wish a warm welcome back to Trey Anastasio, Jon Fishman, Mike Gordon, and Page McConnell, and the very best on their renewed musical journey.

In the summer of 2004, the band said farewell to thousands of fans who had persevered through torrential rain and knee-deep mud—some having walked many miles to see the band's final concerts in a farm field in Coventry, VT. For so many of the band's followers, it was a bittersweet moment, historic and mournful at once and the end of a singular era in American rock and roll. True to the band's roots, and despite the rain, it was fitting that the farewell took place in the middle of the glorious Vermont countryside.

Much to the joy of many Vermonters and people across the United States, the band could not resist the desire to perform once again, and this weekend marks their return to the stage in what Phish's fans hope will be the beginning of a sustainable period of happiness and creativity for the band.

What began at the University of Vermont in Burlington, and was nurtured at Goddard College in Plainfield, flourished into an enormous creative musical force that delighted fans from across the world for many years. They spread their music throughout Europe and Japan, from coast to coast in the United States, and rang in the millennium in front of 85,000 people on the Big Cypress Indian Reservation in Florida, playing that concert's final notes as the sun rose over the horizon at the dawn of a new century.

Theirs has been a remarkable journey of musical exploration, improvisation and risk-taking much akin to the early era of the Grateful Dead. From outdoor summer festivals to Halloween celebrations that found the band donning musical "costumes" by playing an album of another musical group from beginning to end, Phish carved a niche in the musical world that was left conspicuously empty with their retirement.

As Americans stand at a crossroads and contemplate the way forward during a difficult time, artistic expression will play an important role in reminding us all that despite the difficulties we face, we should not forget those things in life that bring us happiness and that connect us to one another. Whether we find solace in a good film, a great novel, making art through photography, writing, or painting, or experiencing a musical performance, I want to acknowledge the ability of Americans to keep the creative spirit alive even when we face our most daunting challenges. And I find reason for optimism in the fact that the announcement of Phish's reunion was met with such overwhelming enthusiasm from their fans.

So as thousands of people welcome Phish back to the stage at the Hampton Coliseum this weekend, I am proud to say as a Vermonter: Phish, it is good to have you back. I know you have been missed.●

#### MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:25 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following joint resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.J. Res. 38. Joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2009, and for other purposes.

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. 14. Concurrent resolution supporting the goals and ideals of Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week.

#### MEASURES REFERRED

The following concurrent resolution was read, and referred as indicated:

H. Con. Res. 14. Concurrent resolution supporting the goals and ideals of Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

#### MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

S. 542. A bill to repeal the provision of law that provides automatic pay adjustments for Members of Congress.

#### 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. REID (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. SCHUMER, and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 542. A bill to repeal the provision of law that provides automatic pay adjustments for Members of Congress; read the first time.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. BEGICH, and Mr. UDALL of New Mexico):

S. 543. A bill to require a pilot program on training, certification, and support for family caregivers of seriously disabled veterans and members of the Armed Forces to provide caregiver services to such veterans and members, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

#### SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. SPECTER (for himself and Mr. CASEY):

S. Res. 68. A resolution recognizing the contributions of the Pennsylvania National Guard in service to the Nation; to the Committee on Armed Services.

#### ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 231

At the request of Mr. LIEBERMAN, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. KAUFMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 231, a bill to designate a portion of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge as wilderness.

S. 428

At the request of Mr. DORGAN, the names of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) were added as cosponsors of S. 428, a bill to allow travel between the United States and Cuba.

S. 479

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 479, a bill to amend the Chesapeake Bay Initiative Act of 1998 to provide for the continuing authorization of the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network.

#### STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. REID (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. SCHUMER, and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 542. A bill to repeal the provision of law that provides automatic pay adjustments for Members of Congress; read the first time.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be placed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 542

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. ELIMINATION OF AUTOMATIC PAY ADJUSTMENTS FOR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (2) of section 601(a) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 31) is repealed.

(b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 601(a)(1) of such Act is amended—

(1) by striking "(a)(1)" and inserting "(a)";

(2) by redesignating subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C) as paragraphs (1), (2), and (3), respectively; and

(3) by striking "as adjusted by paragraph (2) of this subsection" and inserting "adjusted as provided by law".

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section shall take effect on February 1, 2011.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. BEGICH, and Mr. UDALL of New Mexico):

S. 543. A bill to require a pilot program on training, certification, and support for family caregivers of seriously disabled veterans and members of the Armed Forces to provide caregiver services to such veterans and members, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, in the Spring of 2007, I met a 27-year-old Army Sergeant named Eric