

So I have this suggestion—and one of the Senators to whom I want to make the suggestion is here today, the Senator from Connecticut. I suggest Senator LIEBERMAN and Senator COLLINS, who are the chairman and ranking member of the committee with jurisdiction over this mess and who have a tradition of working well together, should set as a goal to clean it up by the end of the year. Invite all the former White House counsels of both parties to give their opinions. Consolidate and simplify the forms so we learn only what we need to know.

To help with this, I suggest that Senators LIEBERMAN and COLLINS form one of those “gangs” that we occasionally form in the Senate, maybe a dozen or more Senators equally divided among both parties—some from the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee and some not—in order to limit the possibility that everyone will run away from the final recommendations because they fear someone might think Senators are not interested in ethical and good government.

Good government right now means fixing the banks and having the best possible team to do it. As a Washington Post editorial writer said yesterday of the President:

As he convened his “health care summit” at the White House . . . the stock market was hitting another 12-year low, General Motors was again teetering on the brink of insolvency and the country was still waiting to hear the details of the Treasury’s proposal to bail out banks.

Maybe we can make this grand bargain with our new President: If you will keep your eye on the ball—in this case, fixing the banks so the economy will get moving again—we will work in a bipartisan way to make it easier for you and for future Presidents to promptly assemble a team and govern us properly.

PRESIDENT OBAMA’S STEM CELL EXECUTIVE ORDER

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I wish to highlight the Executive order signed today by President Obama that will bring hope to millions of patients and their loved ones and relief to scientists and researchers throughout the country.

With this Executive order, President Obama has overturned the harmful restrictions on scientific discovery established by President Bush and his administration. And with his Presidential memorandum, President Obama has set our country on a path where science, not politics or ideology, will guide public policy and Government decision-making.

Today’s Executive order will help our Nation’s scientists perform promising stem cell research that may one day provide relief to the more than 100 million Americans suffering from Parkinson’s, diabetes, spinal cord injury, ALS, cancer, and many other devastating conditions for which there is still no cure.

Several of my Senate colleagues, led by Senators HARKIN, SPECTER, KENNEDY, HATCH and FEINSTEIN, and I, tried to allow embryonic stem cell research to go forward with the passage of the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act in both the Senate and the House, but these efforts were consistently blocked by President Bush’s veto.

I am joining my colleagues again on this legislation because we need to codify the protection of embryonic stem cell research in order to guard against the possibility that a future President might seek to undo the tremendous step taken today by President Obama.

In my own State of Connecticut, we lost a great pioneer in the global effort for stem cell research last month with the untimely death of Dr. Xiangzhong “Jerry” Yang. Since he came to the United States from China, Dr. Yang devoted his life’s work to furthering science and working toward curing deadly and debilitating diseases.

Dr. Yang was a brilliant and precocious reproductive biologist at the University of Connecticut who conducted some of the world’s leading work in the 1990’s to refine the cloning of cows and bulls through the use of adult cells in order to improve the efficiency of cloning technology and improve the availability of cloned cattle for size and weight, high milk production, and other favorable genetic traits. Dr. Yang collaborated with Japanese scientists in 1998 to clone a prize bull with cells scratched from the animal’s ear.

While at the University of Connecticut, Dr. Yang organized researchers to help found the university’s Center for Regenerative Biology in 2001. As the center’s director, Dr. Yang continued his work toward producing tissue to be used in heart surgery, organ replacement, and other medical procedures.

He was a leading force behind the Connecticut State Stem Cell Research Program which was signed into law in 2005. This \$100 million initiative to support stem cell research earned Connecticut the moniker “Stem Cell Central” by the New York Times. Dr. Yang will be missed, but with today’s announcement by President Obama, the fruits of his persistence will inform generations of stem cell scientists to come who will now be able to conduct their work without the arbitrary restrictions put in place by President Bush.

Today is a momentous day for patients and their loved ones as well as researchers and scientists throughout the country. To the thousands of parents in the State of Connecticut whose children live every day with juvenile diabetes or who watched and suffered as their loved one succumbed to ALS, cancer, or Parkinson’s disease, today’s announcement can’t bring that loved one back or immediately provide a cure to their disease but it will mean that future generations of Americans may not have to suffer as they did. To-

day’s announcement brings hope that not only can future discoveries be possible, but they are possible right here in the United States.

I applaud the President for his actions today in support of science and hope. And I congratulate the many advocates and researchers in Connecticut and around the country for their persistence in making this hard-fought victory for science a reality.

ALHURRA TELEVISION

Mr. KAUFMAN. Mr. President, I rise to call my colleagues attention to a promising development for U.S. public diplomacy efforts in the Middle East. Yesterday, Alhurra Television, the U.S. Government-sponsored Arabic language channel, launched a new groundbreaking live television show originating simultaneously from five countries and three continents including Dubai, Beirut, Cairo, Jerusalem and Alhurra’s headquarters in Springfield, Va. The 3-hour daily program titled *Al Youm* (Today in Arabic), provides viewers a window to the world through its coverage of the latest news from the Middle East, the United States, and the world. The show also includes topics such as health, sports technology, entertainment news, and social and cultural issues. *Al Youm* includes interviews with everyone from politicians to athletes, leaders in business, and the arts.

On its opening broadcast, *Al Youm* carried an interview with House International Relations Committee Chairman Howard Berman and included a report from Alhurra’s White House correspondent discussing the Obama administration’s outreach to a moderate faction of the Taliban. Since its launch coincided with International Women’s Day, *Al Youm* had a series of reports on the role of women in the Middle East, including a story on young girls being forced into marriage and a live interview with the Executive Director of Dubai’s Social Development Institute. There was also a profile of the former First Lady of Lebanon and her work as the founder of a health center for children with blood diseases. *Al Youm* had the latest financial and sports news, as well as a health segment on the growing problem of obesity.

Al Youm’s entertainment segments featured well-known singers and performers in the region. Popular Arab singer Myriam Fares introduced her latest song that has not been released to the public. Hisham Abbas, another famous Arab singer, joined *Al Youm* during its debut and sang his most popular hit song, *Feno*. Actress Nadine Al Rassi appeared live to discuss her program, *Assr El Harim*, one of the most popular television programs in the Middle East. *Al Youm* also profiled the first Arab singer to represent Israel in the Eurovision Festival.

Al Youm further enhances the strong core of program options already offered

by Alhurra Television. Launched in 2004 under the U.S. Broadcasting Board of Governors, the 24-hour broadcast network has gained traction in the competitive television marketplace of the Middle East. Recent surveys of the Middle East by research companies such as ACNielsen show that Alhurra has a weekly reach of an estimated 26 million adults. Alhurra is broadcast on the Nilesat and Arabsat satellites in the Middle East and the Hotbird satellite system in Europe. Al Youm is also streamed live on the Internet—Alhurra.com—at 4-7 p.m. GMT.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, yesterday I joined people around the world in marking International Women's Day. Since the beginning of the 20th century, variations of this day have been observed as an opportunity to highlight the issues that directly affect the lives of women and girls. At the same time, it is a day to reflect upon the lives, accomplishments, and struggles of women in our personal and collective histories. Much has been achieved since the first celebrants of National Women's Day began advocating for voting rights, shorter working hours, and higher pay. I am pleased that this Congress has already added to those achievements by passing the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009 to help ensure protection from pay discrimination.

Nevertheless, the need for such activism continues and the theme selected by the United Nations for this year's International Women's Day reminds us of that. The theme is "Women and men united to end violence against women and girls." Throughout the world, whether in war-torn villages in eastern Congo or Darfur or Sri Lanka, this theme is tragically relevant. Here in America, too, this year's theme is tragically relevant. Despite all the progress we have made, gender-based violence and sexual assault remain a devastatingly regular occurrence.

We must do more to protect women and girls here at home and abroad whose lives are affected by this violence. I believe one way we can affirm our commitment to improving the status of women domestically and internationally is by ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women—CEDAW—now. The Convention was signed by the U.S. in 1980 and favorably reported by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 2002 with several reservations, understandings and declarations clarifying the Senate's position. Nevertheless, it still hasn't been considered by the full Senate. Our ratification would send an important message to the international community about our commitment to the rights of women and girls.

We still have a long way to go, but International Women's Day reminds us that transformation is possible. We

recognize the awesome power of our heroes who have struggled for change, especially women who have refused to give in or remain silent in the face of injustice. Many famous women come to mind, but there are also so many more whose names may not be noted in the pages of history but whose courage and compassion have made a lasting difference in the lives they've touched. Let's commit today to honor their legacy and to work for a lasting end to violence against women and girls.

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 husband and I are not feeling the effects as much as others, except perhaps at the supermarket. I use Valley Transit or walk because I am legally blind and cannot drive. My husband has been a cyclist most of his life and also has the mindset of using alternative transportation. We live close to his place of employment, so he walks to work. Our 19-year-old daughter, who has a vehicle of her own, has parked it for the most part and rides her bike to work from the Northwest Boise to Zoo Boise. We are pleased that she has been influenced by our lifestyle of not being tied to a vehicle for transportation.

It has been my opinion for many years that many Boiseans are greedy motorists. They must have their cars, a huge part of their image...too good for public transportation, and they are rude behind the wheel. As a pedestrian, I cannot tell you how many times I have almost been hit in the crosswalk when I had the walk signal. Many times a turning motorist has accelerated to beat me through the crosswalk. Also, I have been in the middle of a busy intersection with the walk signal and had to stop for turning drivers as they were not going to stop for me. That infuriates me!

And then, we have the air quality issues in the Treasure Valley that most greedy motorists totally ignore...it is not their problem, apparently. How irresponsible!!

So, to be honest with you, I am not so unhappy about the situation, and only hope

that people will start using alternative modes of transportation and that there will be less cars on the street for both the safety of pedestrians and the improvement of air quality. Maybe it will take a bigger price hike to alert citizens to their responsibility for the issues of their community and the environment.

MARILYN.

PS. I am a respected, educated native of Boise and my motto is, "If the bus is good enough for me, it is good enough for everyone." I know the local transit system is not the best, but if perhaps increased rider-ship increases revenue, perhaps there could be an increase in routes and efficiency.

Our lives have been greatly affected by rising energy costs. My local store prices are high and we have been unable to afford gas to go 65 miles to a cheaper outlet grocery store.

Gas prices have made it almost impossible for us to visit our children and grandchildren who live 4-1/2 hours and 2-1/2 hours away respectively. We used to visit them (and they visited us) about once a month. Now we are reduced to twice a year.

Propane and electricity have risen too, making eating out or a movie impossible. We are a lower middle class family making about \$40,000 a year, yet we cannot afford anything but the basics. How are we supposed to "tighten our belts" any further?

These energy considerations should have been taken into account while President Clinton had his first term. At least then we would be in a much better position today. Not that I am excusing this Congress or President from their responsibility. Please do not wait any longer to protect our citizens from slowly going broke. Otherwise we may not be able to afford Congress at all!

RENATA, Kamiah.

I absolutely agree with your policy of using our own resources to keep America's economy going. Our electrical company has diesel-powered trucks to travel a six-state area, and we are not able to pass along all our overhead because of the tight bidding of jobs. Also, our employees have to have more wages just to keep even or we are not able to keep them. Bottom line—our net return is down.

The time to act was several years ago, but in reality ANWR and coastal drilling has to be on fast track along with oil refining capacities increased. Some time when we reach a crisis mode other alternatives are explored but in the infancy stage the timing is not here yet to allow an impact, although we need to proceed ahead with incentives so other forms of energy can come on line. Has the federal land bank been explored to use fees paid for no production to be applied to raise (example: safflower seed for diesel fuel)??

I appreciate the effort you are doing for our nation and state.

TOM.

I do not support more drilling or any other method of increasing the oil supply. Rather, I would see our money go to sustainable sources. Fund quality research and development of alternative energy (other than those that will compete with food supply) rather than throwing good money after bad.

SIMONSONS, Boise.

Like most Idahoans, the escalating price of gasoline is hitting my family very hard. We do not drive SUVs; we drive small 4-cylinder vehicles. But, when the price of gasoline is four times higher than it was a few years ago, and our wages have not increased, we are having a hard time, even living paycheck to paycheck.