

and purchase more goods online (especially from sites where the shipping is free). For my husband, he will begin commuting to work by bike two days/week. The concept of drilling for more domestic oil is a Band-aid approach to our need for more oil. We would not see the results for years and they would only be short-lived. Instead, states should be focused on building city infrastructure and public transportation systems to accommodate the new reality of high fuel prices. As a nation, we should provide incentives for alternative energy research. As a resident of Boise, I am more than willing to utilize the bus system. However, Valley Ride severely lacks what the Treasure Valley would need to make it an appealing option. I came from a city where I utilized two forms of public transportation a day (bus and light rail). It was an inconvenient in some ways but mostly wonderful considering I saved on gas money, read my book and felt great about doing 'my part' to help the environment. Besides helping residents, a new and innovative public transportation system appeals to those visiting our beautiful valley as well. Our infrastructure and public transportation system in the Treasure Valley lacks the innovation, efficiency and foresight to become a real option for those feeling the crunch of high gas prices. It is too bad that as a nation, state, and county we are so reactive to issues like this rather than leaders! Why not address the local changes that we can make right here and now that will only continue to benefit and serve us going forward?

ALLISON, *Boise.*

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to tell how the rising cost of gasoline is affecting my family. Just yesterday, I had to cancel reservations I had made back in March for a family vacation to the Oregon Coast in September. This "yurt" vacation was going to be the highlight of our year. In fact, we had been planning it since early in March. Already living on a tight budget, this simple vacation would have been an extravagance for us. But I was only able to budget up to \$4 a gallon for gas. Now that the price of gas has reached the \$4 mark and is expected to be much higher by September, we had no choice but to cancel. We will be taking a "staycation" instead.

My husband and I share one automobile and are already conservative with our driving. Most days, he drives from our house to the nearest bus stop (about 3 miles) to take a crowded bus to work in downtown Boise. On the one to two days a week that I need the car to drive to work, I have to get him to and from the bus. We have been doing this for over a year now. Our budget already required this of us when gas prices were under \$3 a gallon. We seem to have no other way to cut back. My husband has been trying to get a job near where we live which would enable him to ride his bicycle to work but, so far, he hasn't been able to. For us, driving less to save dollars at the pump means giving up some time we would usually spend visiting with family and friends, most of whom live 30 miles from us.

Perhaps the biggest way this has affected my family is that we have continued to be unable to afford health insurance. Though my husband has had a couple of good raises over the past year and a half (and is insured through his employer), those raises were eaten up in rising fuel and grocery prices. So, I have been unable to budget in the nearly \$400 month it would cost to put myself and our two boys on health insurance.

Again, thank you for this opportunity!

SUSAN, *Meridian.*

I do not know if this will really help you, but anything is worth a try, especially for the whole of the United States.

My story begins about a year ago, when I discovered I was pregnant. My husband is blind! He receives SSI. Because of this, if I work fulltime and gross \$1,400 in a month, the United States government takes away his SSI. OK, no problem. If I claim our daughter and my husband, then not enough taxes will be taken out, and I will owe at the end of the year and struggle to pay what I will owe. If I do not claim our daughter and my husband, then to survive every month will be a challenge because my net income (take home) will be roughly half and then that leaves little to pay the bills (as if we have enough now). So I work parttime, and we still cannot pay all our bills.

Our electricity bill was over \$200 in one month, during this last winter. With our daughter being a newborn, we just did not want to risk the temperature lower than 65 degrees, which is where we kept our thermostat, just to try to keep the electric bill down. We did receive energy assistance; that helped. However we are still behind in our electric bill, and, to be perfectly honest with you, if I was to work fulltime, I could not afford the fuel in the car. My car is a 1989 GEO Tracker which gets up to 25-28 miles per gallon. So where does that leave my husband, our daughter and me? Broke and completely reliant on the government to survive, especially with the cost of food going up. Our \$900 stimulus check is not going to the economy; it is going to pay credit card debt, just as my income tax return did.

Well, hopefully this will help you in your fight on Capitol Hill.

CHRISSEY, *Sagle.*

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### RECOGNIZING DUKE EYE CENTER

• Mr. BURR. Mr. President, today I recognize the Duke Eye Center in North Carolina for its determined efforts to promote awareness, treatment, and prevention of glaucoma. Glaucoma, an optic nerve disease, is the leading cause of incurable blindness in the United States. Worldwide, 70 million people suffer from the disease, 2.2 million of those in the United States. Because the disease does not usually show signs until the point that irreversible vision loss occurs, the development of early detection and prevention strategies is imperative.

We recently observed World Glaucoma Day, on March 12, 2009. In light of this important observance, I express my thanks for the researchers and staff at the Duke Eye Center, who are devoted to the task of uncovering the cause of glaucoma. Historically, most research and treatment has focused on reducing elevated pressure within the eye. However, not everyone with glaucoma has elevated pressure, and not everyone with elevated pressure develops glaucoma. Researchers at the Duke Eye Center are working diligently to uncover other possible causes of the disease. Researchers and clinicians have excellent working relationships, collaborating on genomics, oxidative stress, and even links to Alzheimer's disease. They are performing cutting edge research, while at the same time delivering cutting edge patient care.

In 2008, Ophthalmology Times ranked the Duke Eye Center fourth best

among U.S. ophthalmology programs. I applaud their hard work and achievements in the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of glaucoma.●

##### HONORING BANCROFT CONTRACTING CORPORATION

• Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize a Maine small enterprise that epitomizes the values and commitment necessary to excel not only as a business, but also as a leader in the community. Bancroft Contracting Corporation, located in the western Maine town of South Paris, is one of the leading general contractors in Maine, and does superb work in industrial and commercial markets throughout New England. I am extremely proud to report that the Small Business Administration has named Bancroft's president, Mark A. Bancroft, the 2009 Maine Small Business Person of the Year.

Bancroft Contracting is a second-generation, family-owned company that provides a wide range of construction and industrial maintenance services to an array of diverse markets. Founded in 1977 by Al Bancroft, the firm's customers include pulp and paper manufacturers, power-generating companies, State transportation departments, and cement and plastics manufacturers. Additionally, Bancroft Contracting supplies thousands of cubic yards of reinforced concrete every season for a variety of projects that include dams, bridges, and large commercial foundations. The company employs more than 130 construction professionals in the winter months and upwards of 200 in the summer. Bancroft's employees represent a wide spectrum of construction professions, from structural welders and pipe fitters, to riggers and ironworkers, and they all possess an extraordinary level of expertise in their specialized areas.

Bancroft Contracting prides itself on relationship-based customer service, and the company responds diligently to all customer requests in a prompt and efficient manner. In a similar vein, Bancroft takes care to contribute significantly to the well-being of the western Maine community. Organizations and institutions that have benefited from Bancroft's generous contributions and services over the years include the University of Maine, the area school department, the Boy Scouts, various local sports teams, Kiwanis, and the Rotary Club.

As Bancroft's president for the past 7 years, Mark Bancroft has had a significant impact on the company's direction. He is a graduate of the construction management technology program in the School of Engineering Technology at the University of Maine. Notable, he started his tenure at Bancroft Contracting at the age of 14 and continued working for the company throughout high school and college. Mr. Bancroft learned the business at an early age and received critical training

from many of the company's skilled craftsmen.

Mr. Bancroft's desire to roll up his sleeves and his ability to understand the business from the ground up has earned him the respect of both his employees and customers alike. Before becoming president in 2002, he worked in a variety of capacities throughout the years, serving as a project manager, human resources manager, operations manager, and vice president of operations. It is this intricate knowledge of the business, along with his distinguished leadership, that has resulted in Bancroft's tremendous 19 percent growth over the last 3 years, defying the downward trend of too many firms during these difficult economic times.

Additionally, Mr. Bancroft serves on several boards of trustees and directors, including, the Paris Utility District, University of Maine Construction Management Technology Industrial Advisory Council, Associated General Contractors of America Education Foundation Trust, and Self Insured Workers Compensation Group Trust. And just last week, Mr. Bancroft was elected chair of the Associated General Contractors of Maine.

On a personal note, in the winter of 2008, Mr. Bancroft donated the use of a crane and several employees to the town of Bethel to help the community construct Olympia SnowWoman. This architectural feat is now in the "Guinness Book of World Records" as the largest snowwoman at 122 feet and 1 inch tall—and what a record to hold! I am proud that Mr. Bancroft played such an integral part in a project that brought a great sense of community pride to Bethel and to Maine.

It is my distinct honor to congratulate Mark Bancroft, an immensely deserving individual, as the SBA's 2009 Small Business Person of the Year in Maine, and I extend my best wishes to everyone at Bancroft Contracting for their continued success. ●

#### 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.)

#### MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:37 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. 628. An act to establish a pilot program in certain United States district courts to encourage enhancement of expertise in patent cases among district judges.

H.R. 955. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 10355 Northeast Valley Road in Rollingbay, Washington, as the "John 'Bud' Hawk Post Office".

H.R. 1323. An act to require the Archivist of the United States to promulgate regulations regarding the use of information control designations, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1429. An act to provide for an effective HIV/AIDS program in Federal prisons.

H.R. 1512. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the funding and expenditure authority of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, to amend title 49, United States Code, to extend authorizations for the airport improvement program, and for other purposes.

#### MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 628. An act to establish a pilot program in certain United States district courts to encourage enhancement of expertise in patent cases among district judges; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 955. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 10355 Northeast Valley Road in Rollingbay, Washington, as the "John 'Bud' Hawk Post Office"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 1323. An act to require the Archivist of the United States to promulgate regulations regarding the use of information control designations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 1429. An act to provide for an effective HIV AIDS program in Federal prisons; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

#### REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. BINGAMAN, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources:

Special Report entitled "History, Jurisdiction, and a Summary of Activities of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources During the 110th Congress" (Rept. No. 111-8).

By Mr. LEAHY, from the Committee on the Judiciary, without amendment:

S. 146. A bill to amend the Federal anti-trust laws to provide expanded coverage and to eliminate exemptions from such laws that are contrary to the public interest with respect to railroads (Rept. No. 111-9).

By Ms. MIKULSKI, from the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

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.

#### EXECUTIVE REPORT OF COMMITTEE

The following executive report of a nomination was submitted:

By Mr. BINGAMAN for the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

\*David J. Hayes, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of the Interior.

\*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

#### 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. KOHL:

S. 627. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Education to make grants to support early college high schools and other dual enrollment programs; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CONRAD (for himself, Mr. BROWNBAC, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. JOHNSON, and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 628. A bill to provide incentives to physicians to practice in rural and medically underserved communities; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. VOINOVICH, and Mr. KOHL):

S. 629. A bill to facilitate the part-time re-employment of annuitants, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. SESSIONS):

S. 630. A bill to make technical amendments to laws containing time periods affecting judicial proceedings; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. KOHL (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. KERRY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. CASEY, Mrs. LINCOLN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. STABENOW, and Mr. BAYH):

S. 631. A bill to provide for nationwide expansion of the pilot program for national and State background checks on direct patient access employees of long-term care facilities or providers; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BAUCUS (for himself, Mr. CRAPO, Mrs. LINCOLN, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. ENZI, and Mr. ENSIGN):

S. 632. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to require that the payment of the manufacturers' excise tax on recreational equipment be paid quarterly; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. BINGAMAN, and Mr. DORGAN):

S. 633. A bill to establish a program for tribal colleges and universities within the Department of Health and Human Services and to amend the Native American Programs Act of 1974 to authorize the provision of grants and cooperative agreements to tribal colleges and universities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. HARKIN:

S. 634. A bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to improve standards for physical education; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. MURRAY:

S. 635. A bill to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate a segment of Illabot Creek in Skagit County, Washington, as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.