

I am beginning to see it again, young people really getting interested in public service. If you have that heart for service, it is the exact opposite of what Time magazine chronicled on the cover of its magazine back in the late 1960s, the "me generation." It was concerned about me, me. Now we see so much interest in helping our communities as being more the "we generation." Now we see a lot more young Americans applying to the Peace Corps and its domestic counterpart, AmeriCorps, and so many other national service programs.

Our new President has issued a call for all Americans to devote at least 1 year of their lives to national service. If I had my druthers, I would want every young person to have an obligation to serve at least 1 year in some capacity to their country. This would have tremendous benefits down the road. They could choose the military, the Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, a teacher's aide—a host of these things in helping out our communities. Of course, we are not at a point, especially with the economic condition we are in, that we can afford that as a mandatory obligation. So what the new President has called for is for all Americans to devote at least 1 year of their lives to national service.

We come today to discuss legislation that is an acknowledgment across the political divide of our President's call to engage people in national service. This is going to be the first substantial investment in our Nation's service programs in nearly two decades. What this bill is going to do is triple the number of participants in our national service programs from 75,000 to 250,000. These volunteers are going to serve as tutors and mentors. They are going to do that for children. They will help build affordable housing. They will teach marketable computer skills. They will repair our parks and waterways. They will run afterschool programs and help respond to disasters in communities.

The legislation would create several new volunteer corps with specific missions in areas of national need such as education, health care, clean energy, and caring for veterans. We have commended over and over our colleagues, Senators KENNEDY and HATCH, in crafting legislation that will inspire and encourage citizens of all ages, not just the young, and all occupations and backgrounds to engage in national service.

Let me say where I see this example of public spiritedness. I see it in senior citizens, who have already had their professional lives, who are now enjoying the fruits of their labors, and they in turn want to respond and are very much as valuable in this national service as the young people.

This bill should be seen as an important national achievement and a good example of how we can come together and overcome the challenges that lie ahead.

Marian Wright Edelman, the first African-American woman admitted to the

State bar of Mississippi, said it is a time for greatness, not for greed. She said:

It's a time for idealism—not ideology. It is a time not just for compassionate words, but for compassionate action.

Heeding those words, Mr. President, it is time for us to take action and to pass this bill.

I yield the floor.

EMPLOYEE FREE CHOICE ACT

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, the Employee Free Choice Act is vital legislation for achieving fairness in the workplace for hardworking men and women across America, and for strengthening the Nation's middle class. I have the deepest respect for my colleague from Pennsylvania, Senator SPECTER, and I welcome his recognition of the need for labor law reform. But I am also disappointed that my friend feels he cannot support the bill in its current form.

I remain deeply committed to moving this important bill forward. Millions of Americans are looking to us to make their workplaces fairer and safer, and their jobs more secure. They deserve better than they have today, and we can't leave them behind.

The Senator from Pennsylvania says that we should not take up the Employee Free Choice Act now because of the challenges facing our economy. I disagree. It is precisely because of the economic crisis that we must take new action to strengthen workers' rights.

Working Americans are suffering in ways we have not seen since the Great Depression. Wages are falling and benefits are disappearing. Workers are losing their jobs, their homes, and their hopes. Now more than ever, workers deserve a voice in the hugely important decisions that will affect their jobs and their families in the years ahead.

Unions were fundamental in building America's middle class, and have a vital role today in preserving the American dream. History shows us that strong unions mean strong economic growth that both businesses and employees can share. Protecting the right to form a union today will help countless working families achieve greater economic security and build a better and brighter future. I hope very much that all of us on both sides of the aisle can work together to pass the best possible bill to put working families back on track.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, on March 12, 2009, I was attending the funeral of a very close friend and was unable to cast votes on rollcall vote No. 97 and rollcall No. 98. I ask that the RECORD reflect that had I been present I would have cast my vote as follows: rollcall vote No. 97, confirmation David W. Ogden, of Virginia, to be Deputy At-

torney General: NO; rollcall vote No. 98, confirmation Thomas John Perrelli, of Virginia, to be Associate Attorney General: NO.

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:

Several years ago, the President, in his State of the Union message, noted that our nation was "addicted to oil". Well, that is the first step of recovery, to admit you have a problem, but it is not recovery. My wife and I decided to do something about it. We built a smaller home (downsized from 3,300 to 1,600 sq feet) right on the Greenbelt in the Waterfront District of Garden City. That cut our commute down from about 7 miles, one way, to 3-4 and eliminated a 300 foot climb/descent. Before the move, we already owned small, fuel efficient vehicles and bike commuted about 50 percent of the time. Now we rarely drive and find we get places faster than by car and do not have to worry about parking. Both of our cars sit in the garage and we plan to sell one shortly.

Our monthly auto fuel bill has gone from about \$60 to almost nothing. Our home gas bill went from near \$100/mo to under \$30. Electric is down to \$30 from \$90. Water is down to \$30 from over \$200 in summer and it takes me about 10 minutes to mow my small lawn with a push mower.

The Greenbelt is my highway now, and I get in about 100 miles per week just peddling around town. I look forward to my commutes along the river where I dodge geese and squirrels instead of road warriors on the Connector. The exercise improves both my mental and physical health.

I still interact with cars when I head cross town and am amazed at the madness in the streets. It feels like drivers are in such a hurry, and it appears that Idaho's current public transportation policy seems to be "one multi-tasking in a hurry somewhat angry person per SUV".

Remaining addicted to oil can create a host of problems including:

Driving up the price of fuel for everyone (simple supply/demand equation)

Adding to our rapidly deteriorating air quality in the Treasure Valley

Creating the need for additional roads and parking (and more taxes)

Creating windfall profits for oil producing (and not always friendly) nations including Saudi, Russia and Venezuela

Adding to global warming

Creating a need to "defend" oil resources around the world

Now that gas prices are going up, I hear that Americans are beginning to make changes. They are driving less and taking advantage of alternative transportation. Let us build on that momentum and not feed our addiction to oil by rushing to lower prices. I just read about America's most bike friendly cities including Portland, Seattle and even Chicago. Instead of spending Billions to build more roads and parking lots, let us bust our addiction to oil by making Idaho America's most bike friendly state. And while we are at it, let us create the best public transit system in the world. Let us seize the future instead of clinging to the past.

WILLIAM.

The cost of fuel this year has impacted my family heavily; I have actually had to change over to working from home at a reduced income as fuel expenses reached a point that I was spending more on fuel to get to work than I was earning.

I have not filled up my truck with diesel since it was at \$3.65 a gallon, and currently it is an average of \$4.77 to \$4.85 a gallon. To think that this time last year I was paying \$2.39 a gallon for the same thing; that is an astonishing increase of \$2.46 a gallon in 1 year. (When I had first purchased my truck in early 2007 it cost me around \$65 to fill it up, and now it costs closer to \$140.)

The fuel prices have also had a severe impact on my finding better paying employment as I cannot afford to get out and look for work that is not within walking distance and have been told by several prospective employers that they cannot hire me due to fuel costs cutting their budget by up to half.

I have much more I would like to say, but would prefer to keep this short as I know you are a busy man, I will however point out a book to you for your consideration that deals with this very issue, unfortunately it is out of print due to threats to the author's family but I have found a website with it available to read. I hope that you will read it and glean the same insight out of it that I have, and be able to take action that I am unable to regarding it: <http://www.reformation.org/energy-non-crisis.html>.

America desperately needs to break itself of foreign oil dependency and lift the blocks on domestic drilling and refining.

DANIEL.

Thank you for this opportunity to send you my thoughts and opinions on a very important subject—Energy in Idaho!

I am in a position to offer you some unique feedback based on my current employment and the issues I am addressing. I realize that skyrocketing gas and diesel prices are on everyone's mind, but there are other areas in the energy picture that are also very challenging. I wish to address the quickly rising costs of utilities in our state. Everything from how buildings and homes are heated and cooled to drawing the electricity we need to live our daily lives.

I speak with people every day from all walks of life in Idaho who are concerned about future costs of heating and cooling their home as well as turning on the lights or running the A/C in the summertime. They are serious about wanting to make a change to a more sustainable lifestyle. They just need a small financial push to get them to the other side.

My company designs, installs and services renewable energy systems for homes, commercial and industrial buildings as well as

farms and other agriculture uses. I field phone calls and e-mails from almost every walk of life (doctors, lawyers, school teachers, government workers, businessmen, housewives, farmers, religious etc.). There is no stereotype or classification one can use to identify people interested in renewable energy—it is everyone!

Our company has been in business almost five years, and we install wind, solar and geoeexchange (aka geothermal) systems in Idaho. We have worked from Twin Falls to Coeur d'Alene, and have spoken with many in between about their sincere desire to obtain renewable energy solutions in their lives. People want to look up at their solar array on their roof or the wind turbine out on their property and feel a sense of comfort that they are in control over a portion of their energy usage per year. Others are paying \$700 to \$900 a month to heat their modest-sized homes on propane or fuel oil. They come begging for help through our geoeexchange systems. Over and over, the main hurdle is upfront costs. As you may know, renewable energy generally requires a person to invest upfront in a system such as a wind turbine, solar array or geoeexchange.

Many of the states around us (Oregon, Washington and Utah that we have researched), offer substantial financial assistance to citizens wishing to make the transition to renewable energy. Idaho currently sticks out as a sore thumb when it comes to helping its people invest and obtain renewable energy systems. Both the state and the state's utilities could do more to help people make this critical transition to a more sustainable life style. I would ask you to please support any well written pieces of legislation that allow Idahoans to obtain something they really want—renewable energy!!!

Thank you for your time and I would be more than happy to expand further on our experiences and knowledge as it relates to this very important topic.

JEFF, Boise.

My family has set travel needs for work and some other obligations that cannot be changed for obvious reasons; just going for a recreational ride has long ago been cut out of our budget. Now with the horrendous increases in gasoline and food we are scrambling to keep our heads above water. We can cope with this condition very long without serious consequences.

If there were no options available that would be one thing, but to think that our government is not allowing the oil companies to go after the resources that are available in our own country and place this burden on our citizens for the foolishness of the global warming fraud or the slogan of being green, is unconceivable in my opinion. The Congress needs to stop trying to socialize the oil companies and all of us for that matter, we are not stupid, and we can see what they are trying to do.

Our government is not listening to its constituents and it time for the people to find a way to remind the governing body that they work for the people and not the other way around. This not the way the framers of the Constitution intended it to work.

CRAIG.

Thanks for the email concerning the price of high gas. I feel that a lot of times our Representatives could care less about the lower income people in the United States and more about keeping the foreign policies in place. It is really appreciate that you still care.

I live on a small farm in Newdale. It is about fifteen miles east of Rexburg and near the Teton Dam. I have to travel to work every day 30 miles round trip. Because of the nature of my job, there is no other job clos-

er. I try to carpool with other employees when possible and drive a car that gets very good gas mileage. However, it is still hurting our way of live because of the price of gas. We have changed our buying habits and are very careful about the amount of trips we make to town and try to do as much in each trip as we can to avoid making more trips.

The problem we are facing is in our livestock business. We raise sheep and it is a very good responsibility for my children to have these chores to do daily. With the price of gas and the high cost of feed, we are looking at having to sell out simply because the profits are gone and we cannot keep them losing money. We, as adults, can adapt to some of these changes, but I am afraid with the loss of the livestock, my children are going to suffer with these responsibilities. What is going to happen to our children if these prices keep going up and someone does not make some changes? I hope the people we elect and put on Capitol Hill will keep future generations of Americans in mind when they make decisions. Thanks again for your concern on this issue and keep up the good work.

JOHN, Newdale.

Although I can empathize with many Americans at the lowest income levels about the rising cost of energy, we need to keep in mind we still pay less than many countries around the world; e.g. \$10 a gallon in Europe is not uncommon. We have also exacerbated the problem by our choices; (extraordinarily large houses, SUVs, frequent flying, etc.) In fact, Congress actually approved a tax benefit in the not-too-distant past that encouraged businesses to purchase higher weight vehicles; i.e. SUVs. And as long as I see teenagers racing past me in their cars, I have to question if the price has become high enough.

Drilling more oil just "enables" our wasteful habits. And it will not put much of a dent in our total fuel consumption, especially in the short term. It is time we get a grip on how much energy all of us consume. And Congress needs to be allocating funds towards energy research with a future (i.e. Hydrogen, tidal, solar, etc.) versus energy with no future that does not serve the American people; (i.e. ethanol.) I have to amusingly ask myself how it was possible to get to the moon in less than 10 years, yet we have not been able to find a cheap, reliable energy alternative since the last crisis that occurred in the 1970s? How quickly we forget once we get on the other side of a crisis. The best short-term solution is probably to encourage conservation until we get through this "bubble." We will produce more of a surplus quicker than trying to drill our way out of this. But in the long run, we need to have a serious commitment to alternative energy and, frankly, alternative habits. Ironically, increased gas taxes earmarked for alternative energy research may be necessary at some point.

With that said, my family has made these choices:

We use scooters as our primary commute vehicle—75–100 mpg.

We live in a smaller house (despite the urgings of our real estate agent that we can afford so much more).

We plan our errands to reduce fuel consumption.

We limit use of air conditioning in the summer and keep our house between 65 and 70 in the winter.

We do not exceed speed limits on the freeway and, in fact, often go somewhat slower.

We live close to our needs; work, shopping, entertainment, etc.

We limit the use of plastics and recycle as much as possible.

We keep our waste to a minimum; (garbage truck idle time while emptying barrels consumes fuel too!).

We are polite to other motorists to reduce their wait/idle time.

We turn off lights/appliances/etc. when not in use.

Reduced other expenditures to allocate more to energy where necessary.

I do not have time to continue; you get the idea. We did not get into this mess in the short term; we will not get out of it in the short term. Quit trying to politicize this; come up with an achievable long-term plan and be honest about the realities we face to the American people. But get a plan and do it soon.

JOHN, Boise.

My wife and I both have most of our extended family living in Utah. Usually we visit two times per year. This year we will not be going at all. Not only are plane flights becoming unaffordable, but the cost it would normally take to go down and back 10-12 hours is becoming unaffordable. We had planned on going to Seattle this summer to see the sights because we have never been there, but that too has been cancelled. Because gas prices are up, so are hotels, eating out and everything we purchase at the store.

What we used to get grocery shopping for \$200 now takes at least \$240-260. That adds up. We used to go out to eat more frequently, but are doing so less and less because we have to spend and have more to spend on gas to fill up. I used to let my vehicles occasionally get below a half tank, but now, I cannot afford to ever let them get below a half a tank before filling up.

My brother recently filled up his diesel truck which is only 3 years old. It cost him \$170 to fill it up. How ridiculous is that? In a nutshell, because it costs more at the pump, I travel less, eat out less, spend less on groceries, which if you times that with all the other just 50,000 other people living in my community greatly affects our economy. The owner of our Ford dealership in town recently confided that he has not sold a truck in almost a month. He is just one dealer, but imagine all the other dealers nationwide who are feeling the impact of high gas prices. It is hurting every aspect of our economy.

What we as commonplace Americans get tired of is our government leaders fighting amongst themselves so much and so often that they cannot agree on a policy to help us with this crisis. [Too many wealthy people don't have any idea of what middle class Americans face,] so the price of a gallon of gas does not really get taken into consideration because he or she does not usually fill up their own cars; they are chauffeured everywhere. Some of them have always been chauffeured everywhere and are still ignorant of what we as middleclass Americans are suffering. They live in houses and drive cars 99% of us will never be able to afford. But, the 99% of us who struggle are getting tired of politicians not legislating policy to build new refineries or freeing up some of our reserves so gas prices can come down. We know inflation exists, but this is insane!

Nine out of the ten solutions that I hear being discussed recently on the news will have no impact on the price at the pump I am paying for at least five to ten years. Not to burst your bubble, but we commonplace Americans [want leaders who will do something now, not five or ten years from now]. If a gallon of oil costs 5 cents when it pumped out of the ground and between the time it leaves Saudi Arabia and gets to the US, it escalates to over \$3 a gallon, who is ripping us off? The distributors are ripping us off, and they are the ones who need to be penalized immediately.

If you as our leaders [want] this great nation to come to a grinding halt in travel, [if] you want most of the restaurants, and movie theaters, and amusement parks, and small businesses to keep declining in their profits, go ahead and keep doing what you have been doing about escalating gas prices, nothing. But if you still have a heart left in you, you will come up with solutions that will impact what we pay at the pump—now!, not five, ten or twenty years from now when gas will be so unaffordable that only the super rich will be able to do anything!!

Please do something now!

CHRIS, Lewiston.

Yes, Senator, the increase in fuel prices affects us. We have not been able to take our family on a real vacation in years, and we certainly will not this year with the outrageous cost of gas.

Having said that, it is just as important to me to see the Idaho Delegation do something to save our wild salmon runs. I get very frustrated that these "hot" issues receive so much attention while we throw away billions on a barge and dam system that does not work. If you and the rest of the Idaho delegation continue to do nothing on this issue, your legacy will be the extinction of Columbia/Snake salmon, the runs that once were the most abundant in the world. And Idaho river towns and fishing outfitters will continue to languish economically because the runs are not healthy.

TED.

I am taking a few minutes to respond to a request from fellow Idahoans as to fuel costs. As you already know, Idaho is not a greatly populated state (and that is not a bad thing!). But, in my particular job requirements, I need to travel throughout all of southeastern Idaho to attend to cities that are in our service area. I do not have an option of commuting or staying in the office and still be able to provide the customer service to our members, as is necessary. It had cost me about \$40 to fill my car's tank with gas—now it is costing about \$52 for that same tank, (so the \$120 I was spending on fuel is now costing me about \$208 per month). That is almost a 100% increase.

DONNA, Idaho Falls.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CONGRATULATING KENTUCKY HISTORY AWARD WINNERS

• Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, today I congratulate the winners of the 2009 Kentucky History Awards, which was held at the Thomas D. Clark Center for Kentucky History. These awards are sponsored by the Kentucky Historical Society and recognize exceptional achievements by individuals, business and civic leaders, communities, museums, and history organizations throughout the commonwealth in the field of history. Several projects and individuals that have demonstrated tremendous efforts to promote the preservation, awareness, and appreciation of state and local history were honored at this ceremony.

These awards serve as an opportunity to recognize the dedication and hard work of those who cherish Kentucky history. This year the Madison County Fiscal Court received the Government Award for their Civil War Battlefield

Preservation and Interpretation. The Larue County Herald News received the Media Award for the Lincoln Bicentennial. These two organizations have done the Commonwealth a great service by being advocates for our history.

Dr. Kenneth Carstens of Calloway County was also a recipient of one of these prestigious awards. Dr. Carstens received the Lifetime Dedication To History Award for his service. During the time leading up to this award, Dr. Carstens received numerous teaching recognition awards, chaired many significant committees on Murray State University's campus, and conducted research for the college's contract archaeology program. He has published nine books and is currently working on six more.

Mr. President, I would like to thank these people for their contributions to the State of Kentucky, and I wish them well as they continue to enhance the history of our great State.●

REMEMBERING JOSEPH SONNEMAN

• Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I wish to remember an Alaskan who has recently passed away, Joseph Sonneman.

Joe was born in and attended school in Chicago, IL, but he spent much of his life as an Alaska resident living in our great State. Educated in government finance and an attorney, Joe worked as a budget analyst, photographer, taxi driver, heavy equipment oiler on the Alaska pipeline, postal worker, and university instructor.

Joe had a passion for public service and was active in politics his entire life. He was active in the Alaska Democratic Party, served as their treasurer, and ran for the Mayor of Juneau and participated in several U.S. House and U.S. Senate primaries. Having been born in Chicago, Joe had the pleasure of living to see Barack Obama, a Chicagoan, sworn in as President of the United States earlier this year. His political activism extended to my office as well, since Joe would periodically write to me to convey his views on the issues of the day, particularly on veterans' health care and the military.

A veteran of the Korean war, Joe served as a radar repairman in Korea between 1963 and 1966. He lived for several years at the Washington State Veterans Home near Seattle, WA, where he courageously battled ALS, or Lou Gherig's disease.

I would like to convey my condolences and God's blessings to his family, including his mother Edith and his sisters Eve, Toby and Milly.

Joe, you and your family will be in my thoughts and prayers.●

NORTHEAST KINGDOM ANNIVERSARY

• Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, sixty years ago today, Senator George Aiken, one of the great statesmen in