

important contribution to election observation in the region.

The Winter Meeting traditionally includes a plenary debate on issues that are particularly relevant and timely. This year, the debate focused on a proposal by Russian President Dmitri Medvedev and supported by French President Nicolas Sarkozy for a new European security architecture. Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Grushko and senior French Foreign Ministry official Veronique Bujon-Barre made opening presentations. Senators WHITEHOUSE, WICKER, and I each spoke in the debate. We stressed the need to maintain a comprehensive definition of security to include respect for human rights and commitment to democratic governance and, while not opposing further work, defended the NATO Alliance which some believe the Russian proposal intends to undercut. There was also considerable criticism of Russia's actions against neighboring Georgia in 2008, with considerable opposition to any attempt to legitimize this action in any new security talks.

As the Winter Meeting came to a close, Representative MOORE took the floor during debate on gender issues to announce her intention to introduce a resolution on the issue of maternal mortality, calling for action to reduce the number of women around the world and especially in developing countries who die due to the lack of medical care in response to complications associated with pregnancy and childbirth. A Greek presentation on piracy as a new security threat and presentations on Kazakhstan's preparations to chair the OSCE in 2010, rounded out the closing issues of the meeting.

In addition to the sessions of the Winter Meeting, the congressional delegation was briefed by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Secretary General, Spencer Oliver of the United States, and by the Chargé d'Affaires of the U.S. Mission to the OSCE, Kyle Scott. The delegation had bilateral sessions with OSCE Chair-in-Office Bakoyannis and numerous OSCE officials.

The U.S. delegation also held a lengthy bilateral session with the Russian delegation, during which dialogue between the U.S. Congress and the Russian Duma, among other issues, was discussed. While we do not agree on many issues, we did firmly agree on the importance of continued dialogue.

By all accounts, the Winter Meeting was 2 days of robust debate, and the U.S. Delegation was an active part of that debate, engaging European friends and allies on a variety of issues of importance to the United States. I want to thank my colleagues for the active participation throughout the trip.

At the invitation of the Government of Slovakia, I traveled the very short distance from Vienna to Slovakia's capital, Bratislava. My other colleagues remained in Vienna actively engaged in the work of the assembly discussed above.

Immediately upon arrival in Bratislava, I had a substantive and lengthy discussion with Foreign Minister Miroslav Lajčák. As the Minister had taken office just 2 weeks prior to our arrival, I had the privilege of being the first Member of Congress to meet with him in this capacity. Our wide-ranging discussion touched on the global economic crisis, the Middle East peace process, the situation in the Balkans—the Minister was recently the EU Special Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina—anti-Semitism, and the plight of Slovakia's Roma population.

Following that meeting, Keith Eddins, the U.S. Chargé d'Affaires, hosted a lunch with leading academics and NGO leaders to discuss current events in Slovakia and the state of U.S.-Slovak relations. After lunch, I met with the chief rabbi and the lay leadership of Slovakia's Jewish community. Finally, before heading back to Vienna, I met with a cross-section of Slovakia's Roma community. As Europe's largest ethnic minority group, the Roma have been victims of some of postwar Europe's greatest discrimination. Congress's attention to issues of importance to this community has been inadequate in the past, but I hope to see that change in the future.

The U.S. House and Senate should both take great pride in the unique ability of the Helsinki Commission to represent the views and values of our country abroad, something which I, as chairman, intend to continue at future OSCE Parliamentary Assembly gatherings, including the Annual Session which convenes in Vilnius, Lithuania, in June and July of this year.

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:

Fellow Idahoans, the high cost of gas is taking its toll on my family as well. I have

very little money left after driving to work and paying rent and insurance, to buy food. After everything is all paid for, I do not have any money to stash away for a rainy day. However, Senator Crapo and others are letting us down and trying to give us simple answers. I have spent countless hours researching alternative technologies for transportation as well as power. Senator Crapo and our other elected officials want to tell us the simple way is to drill for more oil, according to government scientists, drilling in ANWR will not actually have an impact for five years if we started drilling tomorrow, and it would only lower gas prices by 1 cent and make no mistake when they say domestic drilling this is what they mean. They want to open more nuclear power plants but nobody wants to take the nuclear waste and Senator Crapo has no problem leaving it in Idaho for us to deal with the nuclear waste of the world!!!! And Senator Crapo has no plans for the waste!! Search the MYT engine; it is a great new technology that just disappeared because oil companies do not want that technology out there. Our elected officials are not working for us and they are stuck in the mindset of oil as the only alternative. I demand and so should you that NASA stops wasting our money going to Mars and INL stops wasting money studying nuclear power and works on a way to make solar power and wind power more efficient. Solar thermal is a new type of solar power that is more efficient than solar panels and produces more electricity. Wind power is great and I see more windmills going up all around Idaho. The truth is the technology and the know how are out there, but our elected officials are stuck in the mindset of oil, coal, and nuclear and not willing to look at alternatives; demand that they think outside the box.

STEVEN.

I appreciate your emails and asking how the energy problem is affecting me and my family. I also hope you still have your integrity and that you honestly do what is right for America. In the 1990s, you were my Aunt's attorney in fixing her estate before and after she died. She was very impressed with you and thought you were an honest man. Please do not let us down.

I am a retired/disabled police officer. I am on an income that is pretty much fixed, but my wife is still working though she is 66 years old, and we are both on Medicare and Medicare Part D. I also take care of my 82-year-old father who lives 30 miles from me and he is also on a fixed income. I have to drive that distance two to three times a week to take care of him. We have a small car, but the prices are getting unbearable. We have cut back on most trips to the store and to take care of my dad. We are still doing okay, but the fear of the unknown grows constantly within us. I wish Congress would get off feeling animals (e.g., caribou) are more important than people. The environmental thing has just gone too far. I believe in taking care of the things that God has charged us with, but the citizens of this country are important, too.

We are constantly fearful of Congress doing away with Medicare and Medicare Part D. Please do the right thing and make this country something proud to live in again.

CLIFF.

Many changes have come about in our life as a result of the high gas prices.

1. Our planned 7,000 mile summer trip with our grandchildren has been scaled back to 500 miles.

2. We do not eat out, and non-essential foods have been cut from our food budget.

3. We must combine our shopping trips to the mall, grocery stores, library, doctor appointments etc. in order to conserve.

4. Our fixed income budget demands that we limit family birthday and special occasion gifts.

5. We never drive our 2005 diesel powered pickup—it costs over \$200 to fill the tank—no money for that.

6. We are grateful that we can grow a garden and that we have economical public transportation that is available to use in getting to some locations in our city.

7. Retirement, which was quite comfortable for several years, is no longer comfortable—we must watch every penny.

Thank you for allowing us to vent. We must go after the resources within our borders and become energy independent!

JACK and PATRICIA, *Pocatello*.

I e-mailed John Boehner and Bill Sali regarding the idea of a new contract with America. I think we need it badly. I recommend it be called "The Freedom Contract with America." Specifically, it could contain the following:

(1) Freedom from foreign oil and high gas and diesel prices—bring up a vote for the "All of the Above" energy bill of the Republicans.

(2) Freedom from high taxes—bring up a vote to make the tax cuts of 2003 permanent.

(3) Freedom from any more illegal immigration—draft, debate, and vote on a plan to complete the securing of our borders and deal with the existing illegal immigrants in this country.

That is it. Three items that would resonate with the American public. Pledge to bring these up for a vote in the first 100 days if a Republican majority is elected to Congress. The left-wing media and the Democrats would mock it and call it desperation. It does not matter. Take a risk. What do we have to lose?

Anyway, I just wanted to mention to you this thought.

DAVID.

You asked for stories on how high gas prices are affecting people's lives. I provide occupational therapy home health services to children with behavioral, cognitive, sensory, and/or physical impairments that affect the development of skills for functional living. I live in southeast Idaho, and we have a shortage of therapists. These high prices are affecting how many clients and which clients I can see. I tend to see the clients in the more rural or hard to get areas. I now pay \$250-\$350 a month in gas, and only see that going up. This is going to affect whether some families receive the services they so desperately need. It may end up being that only those close to town get services.

We have been spoiled as a nation to consume, consume, throw away, and use more energy that affects global warming than all the other nations put together. They are used to paying higher rates, we are not. I understand that; I just want it to somehow be affordable. I do not want to have to change jobs as I love the one I have! I do not think the idea of adding a tax will help as the oil companies will just pass that on to us, the consumers. I think they do need to pay their full income tax (especially since they have been making billions). Nor do I think drilling in the Arctic refuge areas is the answer either—(I would rather use someone else's oil as long as possible). I think the answer is in energy alternatives. Electric cars/solar cars have been around since the 1960s—however oil and big money kept the companies from further developing those as a priority. Well, the time is now. Develop incentives and cash breaks for people to buy, try, or rent electric, solar, or hybrid type of vehicles. These need to be developed and made available to consumers at reasonable rates. It is the ev-

eryday person that needs those types of vehicles, not just those in the higher income brackets. Possibly offer higher reimbursement consideration at tax time for mileage usage. (I.e.: instead of 46.5 cents per mile, it may need to be 60 cents per mile)

Please, find a way for us to be able to continue to keep our jobs, buy our groceries, have the occasional vacation, and to provide services to those in need.

AJ.

I wrote an email to you recently about the effects of the energy crisis. My son, living in Alaska, has a different perspective that is well taken. Please consider his position, explained in his e-mail below.

CHERYL.

I have a different view of the gas "crisis." I personally am glad that gas prices are increasing and oppose any type of increased harvest of fossil fuels in Alaska. There is a large amount of stored energy beneath the soil in Alaska but it is finite. Once it is used . . . it is just that. The locations of the proposed drill sites in Alaska are remote. Of course the infrastructure to support the harvest can easily be constructed but who will pay for that? We will. I think in today's economy it is unrealistic to ever expect much of a decrease in gas prices. The oil companies are not going to ever give up their profits for the benefit of the general public, regardless of where they drill. It is like a drug dealer luring his addicts in little by little. Pretty soon we are hooked and feel that we cannot survive without it. We as the American public like the addict have become lazy and see no way to survive without "getting more." In rehab they used the old cliché, "Insanity is continually doing the same thing and expecting different results." We the consumer, like the drug addict, have the power to change our present situation. God has blessed us with the faculties to adapt to change and develop solutions to our problems. The recent energy crisis in Juneau is a good example.

In May, an avalanche destroyed the power line responsible for transporting electrical power from a hydro-electric power plant to Juneau. Diesel generators were used to produce energy for the city of over 30,000 people while repairs could be made. The power company announced that the cost of repairs would result in an increase to the consumer of 500% per kilowatt hour. Neither business nor resident had ever planned on such a drastic and sudden increase. What were we to do? What we did was listen to people who had studied and prepared for such things. Most had previously been touted as, "extreme left wing environmentalists." However, now their experience, ingenuity, advice, and insight was publicized in local newspapers and radio shows. Flyers were sent out in the mail with suggestions on how to go about daily life while drastically cutting power consumption. What happened in the face of financial disaster? We listened, took the direction and embraced change. It was extremely difficult at first, and somewhat bizarre. Million dollar homes had clothes drying on lines in the front yard. Grocery stores and businesses turned off the lights and the neon signs that line the streets. People stopped watching televisions in the evening. We took either fewer showers or cold ones to eliminate the need for water heaters. Meals were prepared for ahead of time and planned so that the use of ovens and microwaves decreased. We bought fewer groceries to eliminate the need for a second refrigerator. We used blankets rather than run the electric furnace. I wore my clothes to 3 and 4 times before washing, unless they became soiled to an unsightly point. The re-

sult was an overall decrease in power consumption by the entire city of over 30%.

The power company took note of that immediately. AEL&P (the power company) had originally planned on taking three months to complete the repairs. That would have resulted in the 500% cost increase to last twelve months. Instead, in large part due to the drastic decrease in energy consumption, AEL&P decided it would be in their best interest to return things back to normal ASAP. The repairs were made in one month with the increase lasting only three months. Guess what? Even though our supply is back, people took note and are still working to conserve. At first everyone panicked, and felt that it was a hopeless situation. Some of the meter readers even got beat up by the residents of the metered houses they read. Those idiots are still addicted to their lazy way of life, and are the ones who are asking the government for help to pay their power bills. Those who were not resistant to change are now on to a better, freer way of life. We do have a choice. That is the American way.

In my opinion it is no different than the message taught by the church in its admonition to store food and supplies. The Boy Scout motto is "Be Prepared." I personally think we should take it to heart and be prepared for anything. I for one do not want to be dependent on anyone . . . especially a for profit corporation that makes billions of dollars in profit each quarter.

In Alaska, the oil and mining industries lobby Native American villages and corporations (which own the land) to support their cause. They pay poor communities big bucks to have their citizens do TV and radio spots in support of the company's agenda. They capitalize on the poverty of the people to help them sell their cause, all in the effort of making another dollar. I guess it could be seen as an even trade until the resource is used up, the people who have been dependent on the money from that resource abandoned and the executives of the oil company sitting on top of a fat fortune.

I do not mind paying more money for gasoline right now because I see it as a catalyst for change. I can choose whether or not to purchase the gas. I live about 15 miles from work. It takes me just under an hour to ride my mountain bike one way. I get fit, have time to think, breath fresh clean air, and do not use gasoline. FYI . . . gas just hit 4.75 here and is expected to top \$5.00 by the end of the week. They're telling us that September will be even worse with prices topping \$6.00.

I live in Alaska. We have the greatest stores of fossil fuels in the country. We also pay more to use those fuels than most places in the country. I am not at all in favor of harvesting the natural resources here, and defacing the last unspoiled place in our country to foster the laziness of the rest of the country. Forget about gas prices. Buy a bike, turn off the television, work in the garden, do more manual labor. Supply meets demand. Demand less and the supply will be greater. Produce more the demand will continue to increase . . . just like dope.

This is just my opinion. I wish all of you could experience Alaska. Not the cruise ship, guided hunt/fishing trip Alaska. Come spend some quiet time with me in the woods where you know that when you walk five miles into the brush, you will not come across another soul walking upright on two legs. I hope this letter did not offend any of you. I will not apologize for my feelings but hope I have remained tactful in expressing them.

SHANE.

You requested a couple of paragraphs about how we are affected by high energy prices so I am responding. My husband and I

retired to Kamiah in 1991. We really liked the small community and being close to outdoor activities. Since then, our property taxes have tripled. The town is now considered a retirement community (according to our insurance company), so car insurance has gone up. Every time our Social Security gets a cost of living raise, then Medicare takes most of it.

If we need to buy some reasonably priced clothing or other items, we have to drive 70 miles (one way) to Lewiston. So, it is costing us \$20 plus to go shopping for necessities. Yes, there are towns approximately 30 miles, but on a fixed income the price of clothing and other essentials prevents us from shopping in these towns. The gas stations in this town have finally settled down to the national average, but they were charging 10 cents higher than the national average.

We can no longer afford to go to Lewiston for a nice dinner to celebrate a birthday or special occasion. I do hope you can do something. If nothing else, make sure that Social Security gives us a cost of living raise at the start of next year that includes the high price of gas and groceries, and that Medicare does not take it away.

MARILYN.

The high cost of energy has made me realize that the problems will not be solved by the government. This national crisis has been identified as coming for 30 years with little or nothing to fix it, and most of the time laws are passed that aggravate the energy problem.

Homeowner associations prevent modifications to homes in developments to add solar or wind energy generation appliances to "preserve property values". New housing development companies disregard plot alignment that prompt use of solar energy. Every few developers build homes this smart home technology installed that has been available for 20 years. The added cost of smart home technology would be a tiny fraction of an added cost at construction time and a major cost to retrofit but would pay back in 5 years or less in energy savings when utilized. "Passive Annual Heat Storage" is a technology that would have a major impact on energy savings but will never see any support because it leaves the money saved in the pocket of the homeowner and does not go to some alternate energy conglomerate.

I have personally drawn a circle on the map around my house and anything within one mile I walk to. Anything within three miles I bicycle to and if I have to drive I plan at least three stops or I wait until I have three stops. Any family member that do have to drive are hunting for jobs closer to home and we phone relay to have any one going by a store pick up thing needed so a trip home from work can pick up for a number of family member.

PERRY.

I am writing you this e-mail because of the gas prices. I am a single mom of three boys, and I work a full time job. These three or four years I have not had to get help from the state and was able to make it on my own without the help from the state. But now that the gas prices keep going up I might have to get that help again, just to be able to feed my boys. Life right now is getting too hard when I have to my choice of making sure that I can provide the food for my boys or put gas in my car. So that I can get to work every day and it has been hard. Plus I think that these gas prices are wrong for the amount we are having to pay, but if we do not pay that amount then we do not have a job and no money to buy food and etc. Something needs to be done and stop the gas

prices from going up any more so we as Americans can make it. So please help us.
FELICIA.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

COMMENDING KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS—HAWAII

● Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I congratulate the Kamehameha Schools—Hawaii Athletic Department and coaching staff for winning the Positive Coaching Alliance's, PCA, coveted Honoring the Game Award of 2009. The mission of the PCA is to foster a "positive, character-building youth sports environment." The award goes to schools or organizations serving athletes of high school age or younger that embody PCA principles in using sports to teach life lessons. Honoring the Game Award winners will be recognized at the Eighth Annual National Youth Sports Awards Ceremony at Stanford University's Maples Pavilion on April 24, 2009. This year Kamehameha was one of three schools selected to receive this award and the only school noted for multiple sports programs.

I wish to acknowledge Kamehameha Schools—Hawaii's vision, commitment, and diligent efforts to create and uphold a positive athletic environment for its students, coaches, and fans. Kamehameha is the first PCA-partnered school in the State of Hawaii, and it requires all leaders, coaches, parents, and students who want to participate in the school's athletics programs to attend PCA workshops to be eligible. Additionally, it has integrated the school principle of pu'uhonua—sanctuary—into the 22-sport athletics program, ensuring appropriate behavior toward referees and other visitors. I wish to acknowledge all members of the Kamehameha Schools—Hawaii Athletic Department on their noteworthy accomplishment. I wish to give special recognition to athletic director Bob Wagner, headmaster Stan Fortuna, and school principal Ninia Aldrich.

However, this sort of large scale effort cannot be done without the cooperation and support of all of the student-athletes and their families. I commend the entire Kamehameha Schools—Hawaii community for their initiative and understanding in establishing the high level of sportsmanship and respect that has earned this award.

I encourage these coaches and students to continue their dedication to teamwork, character-building and positivity that helps the young athletes of today become the model citizens of tomorrow. I wish nothing but the best for the students, their families, and their coaches and wish them and the athletic program continued success in future endeavors.●

TRIBUTE TO TESSA SHUMWAY

● Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I would like to recognize Tessa Shumway of

Terry, MT—this year's winner of the National Disaster Response Preparedness Award from the American Red Cross. Tessa is from Terry, a small town in eastern Montana.

In Montana, we are proud of our open spaces, of our outdoor heritage and our rural landscape. We didn't get the title "Big Sky Country" by filling our land with skyscrapers or high rises or byways. We are hard working, quiet people with the grit to build our lives on some of the most beautiful and rugged land on Earth. We are Montanans.

Of course, living in Montana's rural communities can create some challenges. For folks in places like Ismay or Brockaway, when disaster strikes, the nearest help may be miles away. And that is where Tessa Shumway comes in. Tessa is the face of the Red Cross across 10 counties in eastern Montana. Her territory is larger than the entire State of Indiana.

She is on call 24 hours a day, every day of the week. She is the local disaster chair, disaster instructor, preparedness trainer, volunteer recruiter and statewide disaster committee co-chair. In addition to all this, Tessa holds a regular day job as a bartender at the American Legion in Terry.

Tessa received the Disaster Response Preparedness Award not only for her years spent helping the folks of eastern Montana, but also for the new volunteers and Red Cross workers she has trained. It is impossible to know how many lives she has touched, how many people she has helped, simply by passing her knowledge on to others.

I would like to congratulate Tessa, her husband Zane and two children, Josh and Katrina—as well as the folks of Terry, who have a true hero in their community.

March of 2009 was a difficult month for Montanans. Several tragedies shook our State, from a deadly explosion in Bozeman to the tragic plane crash in Butte. Montana's Red Cross stepped up to help folks recover and rebuild. Tessa herself was on hand to help victims of the fire in Miles City and find shelter for folks displaced by dangerous winter storms.

I believe service is one of the most honorable things a person can do. Whether it is service to one's community, State or country—service is the most noble of all human endeavors. That is why I would like to recognize Tessa Shumway as a Montana hero—a woman who has given so much of herself to her neighbors and to the people of our State. We are lucky to have her under the Big Sky and I am proud to call her a fellow Montanan.●

TRIBUTE TO PATRICK J. FINNERAN JR.

● Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I wish to honor a fine Missourian, Patrick J. Finneran, Jr., for his distinguished career as well as his record of community activism.

In 1967, Pat graduated from the University of Notre Dame, where he was