

businesses. To give all children a healthy start on life, she further proposed providing health insurance to every uninsured child from birth to age five.

Governor Sebelius set up counseling programs as well to help senior citizens navigate the complexities of the Medicare prescription drug benefit plan and choose the best plan for their needs. She also established a multistakeholder group of business leaders, consumer groups, health care providers and private insurers to make recommendations on modernizing the health system, promoting coordination and consistency of care and reducing administrative burdens on patients and providers alike.

Through this broad consultative process, Governor Sebelius created a public-private partnership to build and install nationally-recognized health information technology systems, and she pioneered the Kansas "smart card" the first health insurance ID card to implement state-wide standards.

Achievements such as these have brought wide accolades. Governor magazine named her as one of its Public Officials of the Year when she served as Kansas insurance commissioner in 2001. Time magazine named her one of the Nation's top five Governors in 2005. Her nomination is supported by the American Medical Association, the AFL-CIO, and scores of other stakeholders. As Warren Buffet said, "With this appointment, the President just hit one out of the park."

I thank my Senate colleagues for confirming Governor Sebelius' nomination as Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, and I look forward to working with her in the months ahead to achieve real health reform for the American people this year at long last.●

AMERICAN LEGION POST 27

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to recognize the achievements of American Legion Post 27 out of Muscatine, IA. This group hosted its first World War II Honor Tour in Washington, DC, in October 2008, sponsoring 30 World War II veterans from the Muscatine area. The local community raised funds by holding yard sales, dances, and tournaments, and also by asking help from local businesses and friends. The veterans attending the tour were accompanied by family members and volunteers who donated their time and money to come along on the trip. While in DC, the group visited several historical sites including the World War II Memorial and Arlington National Cemetery. I am very proud to represent these honorable veterans and ask unanimous consent that an article written about their time in Washington by Melissa Regennitter of the Muscatine Journal be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Muscatine Journal]

(By Melissa Regennitter)

MUSCATINE, IOWA.—A trip to Washington D.C. became a memorable experience for 30 World War II veterans who had the chance to share memories and make new ones with old friends. Many people made new friends along the journey as well.

Muscatine hosted its first WWII Honor Tour in October after much hard work and dedication from area volunteers who raised more than \$35,000 to give the vets an all-inclusive tour of D.C. and Virginia memorials. That trip included a visit to their memorial, the World War II Memorial in D.C.—situated between Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Memorial. The trip came about after Pam Ramer, former president of the American Legion Post 27 Auxiliary heard a heartwarming story about an Honor Tour her uncle Jim Marshall, 82, a former Navy radio operator from Mount Pleasant, had done. His wife Pauline helped him out and their tour took place in April.

Marshall had already taken the trip, complete with meals, bus tour, hotel and flight, so Ramer looked to him to get things in order. He had told her of the emotional journey it had been, how the vets were treated with dignity, cheers and handshakes, and how much it seemed to mean to them to go on a trip they otherwise may never have taken. By June Ramer had set her mind to the goal and knew it would be about \$1,100 per person. Though it felt like an impossible target, fundraising and a town with a love for its veterans made the elaborate scheme possible.

Fundraisers galore! Post 27 held a yard sale, 1950s-60s dance, car show, volleyball and golf tournaments, dinners and silent auctions. Business in town took part, offering a place to hold the events, donations and prizes. Senators, corporations and school kids who collected change donated money and were recognized on the "flag of honor" wall at the Legion. A woman even gave a house full of furniture to auction off and a local auctioneer volunteered his time to help sell it.

Everyone involved contacted businesses and business associates to ask for support. The reception from the community was remarkable as the word spread; the goal was met a few weeks before the send-off ceremony was held.

AirTran Airways went out of their way to make scheduling accommodations for the 48 people who went; 30 veterans and 18 family members and helpers. The pilots were as happy to have the vets on the plane as the vets were to be going to D.C. When the plane landed at the Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, fire trucks sprayed the aircraft down as it taxied in. The captain said it was a high honor and a way to show appreciation for the vets.

Many monuments. The group arrived on Thursday, Oct. 2, to a Tysons Corner Marriot in Northern Virginia. The weekend was packed with visits to historical sites including The World War II, Jefferson, Lincoln, Vietnam, Marine Corps and Korean memorials as well as Air Force and Navy memorials and museums. They also went to Arlington National Cemetery, the Pentagon, Mt. Vernon and the estate of George Washington, the U.S. Capitol, the White House and downtown D.C. where they shopped for souvenirs and saw Ford's Theater where Abe Lincoln was shot and the home he died in.

At Arlington, a visit to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier brought tears to the eyes of many and honor to all as a group of the Muscatine-area veterans were allowed to participate in a wreath-laying ceremony.

The veterans were treated to fine dining where they enjoyed extravagant meals and

desserts which were all a part of the tour package. A helping hand. Along with the 29 men and one woman veteran were 10 family members who paid their own way to take the trip. In addition to those people, eight volunteers paid their own way so they could be there to push wheelchairs, lend a hand to those who might need it, keep things organized and even make the veterans laugh. What ended up happening was a new found sense of honor for those who had served. The helpers were at times more emotional than the veterans and bonds grew that no one really expected. All of the helpers say that they came home with new friends and made memories they'll never forget.

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:

Saying that "The continual increase in the cost of fuel is affecting Idahoans" is a major understatement. I, my friends, my family, and a large number of my co-workers have already cancelled a number summer activities and vacations here in Idaho due to the price increases. All fuel consumption has been whittled down to just bare necessities such as only driving to work, school, and to purchase groceries. And because of the gas prices, all store products have increased tremendously. My family pays approximately \$50 to \$60 more each week for our basic routine groceries.

I recently found out that my husband and I did not draw on the hunts we put in for this year. And, instead of being disappointed, we were somewhat relieved because of the money that we would have had to spend in order to hunt. We sold our snowmobiles this spring because of the money it would take us in the future to trailer them and keep them operational. I am considering selling my horse trailer because I cannot afford to trailer my horse anywhere. People are trying to unload their horses and stock because the price of hay has literally doubled and they cannot afford to feed their animals. Finding hay is a chore in itself because the majority of it is being purchased and transferred out of state. All outdoor activities have come to a screeching halt. And not only for my family but for many, many others.

Half of the raise I received at work this past year went to the increase in bus transportation to work; the other half went to the

increase in my benefits. And with the continual increase in fuel prices (which affect the cost of all other things like groceries, and utilities) I cannot even say I "broke even." I am actually behind the economy. The bus services at work are considering raising the cost of the bus passes again because of the fuel cost. People are starting to carpool, and the traffic to work has increased tremendously, and that has increased the danger factor of more accidents. Some of my co-workers have purchased motorcycles because they use less fuel. One employee out here at the site had a near-fatal accident when he collided with an antelope while riding his motorcycle to work.

How sad is it that I had to tell my son that if he made All-Stars in baseball this year, he may not get the chance to play because we cannot afford the trips out of town. We had planned a family trip to Mount Rushmore this summer, and my husband and I told our children that that trip is not likely going to happen. My Power Stroke diesel truck stays parked in the garage and only gets run occasionally to keep in operating well.

Everyone seems to have put the "living" in their lives on hold and have been going through the motions of just getting by hoping that there will be a break in this gloom. People keep saying "something has got to give", "something has got to happen" and the only thing happening is the continual increase in the cost of gas. This week my husband filled two portable gas cans at a local gas station so we can mow and weed-eat our yard. When he returned home, he held up both gas cans and said "You are looking at over \$40 worth of gas here".

I hear a number of reasons and theories to why fuel has skyrocketed. No one seems to know for sure, but we are all (unhappily) trying to live with the effects of it. Thank you for the opportunity to be heard.

ANDREA.

We are a retired couple. I work to provide the extras, which these days are anything except the absolute necessities for life. We have always been a conserving family, having lived in Phoenix, Arizona, previously for 25+ years. We have compact fluorescent bulbs throughout our 3,200-square foot home, costly energy saving insulation, ceiling fans, we cook and heat with natural gas, and we do have a huge 1,800-square foot garden and orchard but water efficiently and preserve all our produce and fruit. We have central air conditioning but only use it during the hottest part of hot days.

About 2½ years ago, foreseeing that gasoline was going to become a major cost, we traded our gas guzzling 9 mpg Chevrolet Trail Blazer for a vehicle which gets about 17-20 mpg in town. We combine our errands to more efficiently use gasoline. We have not taken a traveling vacation in four or five years as gas costs too much.

We also financially aid an 18-year-old daughter at home struggling to provide transportation for her to a part-time job and college classes. We have a married child we have had to financially help as they acquire more education to increase their earning capacity. We have done all we can on our limited retirement incomes to conserve. We still suffer and financially fall further behind every year.

In the past this was caused by tremendous premium increases in our health insurance premiums combined with increases in the cost of electricity and natural gas. Roughly two years ago when gas rose to \$2 per gallon and continued to increase, we started observing and feeling the impact of rising fuel cost as it affects every item we consume or use.

Recently our 32-year-old son came to live with us as he could not support himself any

longer living in Phoenix. We felt that big time in the food budget.

We recently had a family meeting and we as a family are doing or not doing the following trying to be proactive so as not to have to sell our home, fall behind in our debt paying or being in a position of bankruptcy.

Conservation of water, limited showers, laundry and running of dishwasher. No more gas money for daughter; she must now limit her trips for anything other than work or school. Computer and accessories are turned off at end of day. No wasting of food, take smaller portions. No extra goodies at the grocery store. (We have always primarily shopped at Winco.) Hardly any entertaining; cannot afford the food cost. No more lights left or TVs running and no one watching. Waiting longer to turn the AC on and turning the thermostat higher. The stimulus check (which is a waste of government money) is in our saving account. Will probably have to use it for gas or food.

I have all but lost my job as no one has the money to spend at the business where I am barely employed. Also I was working full time 40 + hours at the Outer Limits Fun Zone. In January my hours were cut to 16 hours or less per week and June 26 my hours were reduced to a mere 6 hours weekly. Yes, I am going to have to find at least another part-time job to stay afloat.

If this keeps up I do not know if we can survive. It is getting real scary!! Thanks for listening,

BRENDA.

I drive from Middleton to Boise 5 days a week to work. The traffic is heavy and sometimes slow. I wish there was a motorcycle lane on the freeway for those that want to ride our motorcycles to work. It costs a lot less to ride a motorcycle than a car. My husband rides his motorcycle to work every day when weather permits. He spends \$7 per week. That is a relief for us, since his truck would cost a lot more to fill up.

Nuclear power—I do not believe we need to pollute the Earth with this poison. During World War II, our government paid scientists to develop the nuclear bomb. These people worked hard, until they were successful in their endeavors. Why then can not we do the same to find other non-pollutes forms of energy?

It is imperative that we do not continue to pollute the Earth. When a natural disaster happens, like floods, earthquakes, etc., the poisons of the Earth hunt mankind. Let us learn from what is happening around the world—disasters, and let us develop forms of energy that will not come back to haunt us later.

TELMA.

You asked Idahoans to share their stories of how high energy prices are affecting us. Many of us in Adams County and surrounding areas face an even greater crisis than the high cost of energy. We are being denied fuel to heat our homes. And it is not the big oil companies or OPEC that are leaving us out in the cold. It is the U.S. Forest Service.

As you know, all of America's national forests are required to develop new Travel Management Plans to designate roads and motorized trails in order to curtail indiscriminate cross-country motorized travel and protect natural resources. Private citizens, our Adams County Commissioners, and the Adams Natural Resource Committee have worked diligently with the Payette National Forest for the past two years to try to craft a reasonable, pragmatic travel plan. After all, the Payette National Forest makes up nearly two-thirds of the land in our county. It is important to us to be good stewards of

our public land while maintaining access for work and play. For many residents of Adams County, that access includes the ability to gather firewood to heat our homes.

Throughout the NEPA process for the Travel Management Plan, we submitted hundreds of comments regarding the importance of firewood collection for personal use. Many families in west-central Idaho continue to heat their homes exclusively or primarily with wood. However, the Forest Supervisor has determined that firewood gathering is a "non-significant issue," according to the FEIS. Decisionmakers seem determined to move ahead with the alternative that closes all roads on the forest unless they are designated open. In addition, wood cutters would be limited to traveling no more than 300 feet from a designated road to retrieve firewood. I invite you to come drive the few roads that will remain open to motorized travel and try to find enough firewood that meets all of the current and proposed restrictions. You quickly will see why so many Idahoans are hot about these unnecessarily restrictive regulations.

Firewood is a renewable bio-fuel, not a fossil fuel that is expensive to locate, extract, refine and distribute. Under former firewood guidelines, with careful scouting, we were able to find suitable firewood within 20 to 30 miles of our homes. Under the proposed firewood restrictions, we may have to travel 60 to 80 miles each time we need to bring home a load of wood. And each household will have to make several of those lengthy, fuel-consuming trips each year to lie in enough wood for the winter. In addition, as accessible firewood becomes more and more scarce because of these restrictions, we will see more user conflicts, resource damage, and accidents among woodcutters forced into close proximity.

The solution to this problem is obvious. The Payette National Forest can simply designate all existing forest roads open to motorized travel unless specific resource concerns necessitate closure. Remember, the purpose of the national rule was to control indiscriminate cross-country travel. The directive is to keep motorized vehicles on the roads and trails. Blanket closures of more roads and trails does not accomplish that goal. In fact, such sweeping closures are counterintuitive. Nor has the Forest conducted a thorough analysis of existing roads and trails, despite our repeated requests. Furthermore, these extensive closures create a genuine hardship for Idaho families who are trying to heat their homes efficiently and economically, using renewable biomass that is close to home, rather than scarce fossil fuels from halfway around the world.

Please restore some sanity to this process. Encourage the Payette Forest Supervisor to select the less radical and less onerous alternative for the new Travel Management Plan. By designating all existing forest roads open unless otherwise marked, she will make it possible for rural Idahoans to continue to gather firewood from our National Forest. At the same time, she will help better distribute use across the forest, rather than concentrating users on few roads and condensed areas, which would actually accelerate damage to the resource, increase user conflicts, and raise the risk of accidents when too many woodcutters converge in smaller and smaller confines.

Let us utilize renewable biomass while reducing the wildfire fuel load in our backyard. Thank you for supporting responsible use of our natural resources and our public lands.

WENDY, *Indian Valley.*

I am glad you are willing to listen to the residents of Idaho. Gas prices continue to amaze me and we have cut back on traveling

as much as possible. As a result in increased fuel prices, food prices continue to climb as do electricity costs. Unfortunately, salaries and benefits do not continue to rise as well.

I know that it is hard to know what to do to help the situation, but I have one solution that would benefit us. Get rid of daylight savings. Not only do my children (and I) have a hard time adjusting to the time change every spring and fall, but I honestly feel it causes us to use more energy. We have to stay up until nearly midnight every night just to allow the house to cool down. My children also stay up later because it is still light outside until 10 p.m. so it is easy to lose track of time. I believe one of the states did a study as well and found that daylight savings does indeed cause us to use more energy not less. My son just returned from visiting family in Arizona, and he is ready to do away with daylight savings as well. Please consider this as a potential help to our energy problems.

SHERYL.

I am a 73-year-old senior trying to live on Social Security and a bit of other income. Over 2 years ago, we took guardianship of a great-granddaughter; her mother is incarcerated due to meth addiction. We have a diabetic daughter whose kidneys failed; she is now undergoing treatment three times a week. She nearly bled to death three times in one month, as she was home sleeping and her shunts opened. They had to close them off and use a chest catheter now. She is scheduled for a triple bypass and to correct a heart defect on July 8.

We are so grateful to still have her with us. We have to help her with her many bills (medical, food, gas etc.), as she lives alone in a small house about 3 miles from us. She still is able to enjoy some freedom in her life, as long as we can afford all this. I do not know how long we can do this. She is able to get some assistance, but not nearly enough.

My husband, who will be 77 in August, has gone back to work on a temporary job at the INEL, for as long as he can handle. He is gone 12 hours a day from home.

Yesterday, I went to Wal-Mart, and a 5-pound block of cheddar cheese was \$18.97 per cube.

Just how much can this go on? Why was this allowed to go on at all? With an energy bill all these years. As far as I am concerned, everyone who voted against these bills [was not considering the long-term. Now the American public is paying for the shortsightedness of these actions.]

LYDIA, Idaho Falls.

I am writing in concerns to the raising gas prices and how it is affecting me. I currently work full-time as a paper delivery person. I have nine routes between two paper companies, the Spokesman Review and the Daily Bee. Last year I was forced to pick up more routes within my area just so I could pay for gas and still support my three little girls. This year as gas continues to climb, I am forced to go to work cleaning houses on the side during the day, on top of my paper routes. I am a mother who was working nights so I could be home with my kids and not pay someone else to raise my kids for me. Last year I started home schooling my two school-age children due to lack of faith in the public school system. My kids love it and are excelling now where one was behind at the beginning of last year.

Now I face trying to juggle two jobs, my own schooling and the schooling of two of my children. I am trying to better myself, and every time things look up financially, the cost of gas or something else goes up, but the cost of living and the going pay rates stay the same. Tell me how a single mother of three is supposed to get out of poverty when the cost of everything, especially gas for those who work in the service industry, is

going up faster than the money is coming in. I am not looking for hand-outs; I just want things to be reasonable. When delivering papers, you can have a walk route or motor route. The motor routes get paid twice to three times as much as the walk routes. I have walk routes but so many papers that I have to drive, not to mention the wear and tear of the stop and go of the job. I also have to porch 90 percent of my papers, which has caused wear and tear on my body that cannot be fixed. I feel that a paper route is a paper route, and you should get the same rate per paper, not a different rate for different mileage. What about the miles on my body that is twice as much as someone with a motor route? I would like to see changes in the way we are reimbursed for gas because 40 cents to the gallon, when a gallon is \$4 just is not fair for anyone.

ACCALIA, Sandpoint.

Our family has cut back on the use of our auto. We have a high mileage Honda Civic that gets 40+ mpg on trips but we only make a trip when we have to. We combine errands and use the car for dual tasks. We will walk or carpool when possible.

Now I have an immediate short-term solution to the high price of gas, jet fuel, and diesel. It involves our government subsidizing the cost of energy to hold the price of gas at around \$2.50 a gallon to the consumer. It would not increase the Federal Government's budget. You could simply eliminate all the pork packages added to about every bill that is passed. You could also eliminate the subsidies to the big oil companies and, if necessary, eliminate the agricultural subsidies, especially the ethanol support. What I am saying is that if government would use the taxpayers' money with frugality and common sense, they would have the resources to hold the price of fuel down until a permanent solution surfaces. If we do not get a handle on the rising cost of fuel our economy and the economies of the world will be destroyed.

JERRY, Boise.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR GENERAL DANIEL V. WRIGHT

• Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I wish today to recognize and pay tribute to MG Daniel V. Wright, the Deputy Judge Advocate General of the Army, for his many years of exceptionally meritorious service to our country. General Wright will retire from the Army on May 29, 2009, having completed a distinguished 36-year military career. We owe him a debt of gratitude for his many contributions to our Nation and the legal profession, particularly during operations in support of the global war on terror.

Born on the Fourth of July in 1951, in Birmingham, AL, this great patriot grew up in Miami, FL. He graduated in 1973 from the United States Military Academy and was commissioned as an infantry officer. His initial assignment was to the 25th Infantry Division, Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, where he served as an infantry officer until 1977. He was then selected by the Army to attend law school through the Funded Legal Education Program and completed his legal studies at the University of Miami.

His career as a Judge Advocate spanned the globe and included the

most challenging assignments. He quickly distinguished himself as an expert in operational law when he served as the first Regimental Judge Advocate for the 75th Ranger Regiment, America's premier rapid-reaction assault force. He later served as the legal adviser for the Joint Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg, NC, where he participated in operations in Somalia and Haiti. As the Staff Judge Advocate for the U.S. Army Southern European Task Force, SETAF, in Vicenza, Italy, he twice deployed to central Africa as the Joint Task Force legal adviser in support of regional stabilization, refugee return, and noncombatant evacuation operations. From 1999 to 2001 he served as the Staff Judge Advocate for XVIII Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg, where he advised the operational commander of over 85,000 soldiers worldwide.

Upon selection and promotion as a general officer in 2001, he assumed responsibilities as the Commander, U.S. Army Legal Services Agency, and Chief Judge, U.S. Army Court of Criminal Appeals. His service included supervision of the Army's considerable litigation program, government and defense appellate programs, and Chief Judge of the Army's criminal appellate court.

In 2003, he was appointed the Assistant Judge Advocate General for Military Law and Operations, where he forged a cohesive team of experts who delivered legal advice across a wide range of disciplines including the establishment of the Office of Military Commissions, the evolving role of the law in judicial reconstruction and stability operations, and the significant growth of contractors as force multipliers.

General Wright was appointed Deputy Judge Advocate General on October 1, 2005, and promoted to the rank of major general. In this position he served as the principal assistant for the largest legal services corps within the Department of Defense, with more than 9,000 uniformed and civilian attorneys, paralegal NCOs, and civilian support staff across 651 offices in 19 countries. General Wright routinely advised the Judge Advocate General, the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, and other senior military leaders on the most sensitive matters of policy, personnel, ethics, operational law, and military justice. His advice has been invaluable because it was built on decades of perspective, experience, and study, and was delivered with clarity and candor.

General Wright's awards include the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, Army Meritorious Service Medal, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, and Humanitarian Service Medal. He has earned the Expert Infantryman's Badge, the Master Parachutist Badge, and the Ranger Tab.