

and all of a sudden you have a huge dark spot for 50 million Americans. If you wonder about the importance of this, I am talking about the reliability of a system for something we take advantage of every single day.

We are drafting a bill right now in the Energy Committee, and there is a great deal of disagreement about a renewable energy standard requirement that at least 15 percent of electricity is produced from renewables. That should not be controversial at all. In fact, I think a couple dozen states have gone way beyond the Congress on this issue. That should be a slam dunk, but it is not.

Building a transmission system—we are going to have a lot of opposition. But no country gets where it wants to go unless it sets a course. There is an old saying: If you don't care where you are, you are never lost. This country has to set a course and say: Here is where America wants to head for a decade. If, at the end of that decade, we are not less dramatically dependent on foreign oil for this country's energy needs, we are going to be held hostage for a lot of interests around this country. We need to do this, we need to do it right, and we need to do it soon.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. In my capacity as a Senator from the State of Alaska, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. In my capacity as a Senator from the State of Alaska, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

There being no objection, the Senate at 1:31 p.m., recessed subject to the call of the Chair and reassembled at 1:34 p.m., when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. BEGICH).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. In my capacity as a Senator from the State of Alaska, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that other than the pending Dodd-Shelby substitute amendment, the following be the only first-degree amendments in order to S. 896, and that they be subject to second-degree amendments which would be relevant to the amendments to which

offered, with a managers' amendment, which has been cleared by the managers and the leaders, in order, and that once it is offered, it be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid on the table; that upon disposition of the listed amendments, the substitute amendment, as amended, if amended, be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table; that the bill, as amended, be read the third time, and the Senate proceed to vote on passage of the bill.

The list of amendments is as follows:

Vitter amendment No. 1016, pending; Vitter amendment No. 1017, pending; Corker amendment No. 1019, pending; Grassley amendment No. 1020; Grassley amendment No. 1021; Casey amendment No. 1033; Ensign amendment No. 1034; Kohl amendment No. 1037; Kerry amendment No. 1036; Thune amendment No. 1030; Boxer amendment No. 1035; DeMint amendment No. 1026; Isakson amendment No. 1027; Schumer amendment No. 1031; Reed amendment No. 1039; Feingold amendment No. 1032; Reed amendment No. 1040; Boxer amendment No. 1038.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that on Monday, May 4, at 5 p.m., there be 30 minutes of debate, equally divided and controlled between the Senators DODD and VITTER, or their designees, to debate concurrently the Vitter amendments Nos. 1016 and 1017; that at 5:30 p.m., the Senate proceed to vote in relation to the amendments in the order listed above; that no amendments be in order to either amendment prior to a vote in relation thereto, with 2 minutes of debate equally divided prior to each vote, with the second vote 10 minutes in duration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators allowed to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

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:

As of late, the focus of our nation has been on the economy and, more specifically, the price of oil and gasoline and the effects it is having on normal Americans. Most media sources are running stories on the terrible effects of \$4-5 a gallon of gas are having on the average American consumer and their widespread financial hardships.

My sincere belief is that \$4 or \$5 a gallon gas while putting a dent in the wallet is not causing widespread financial hardship on the overwhelming majority of U.S. citizens. The monthly increase for Joe Average is roughly in the \$25-100 range. This amount should be easily absorbed by virtually everyone across the U.S. There are some people for whom an increase this minor would cause them to fall into bankruptcy, but they are the people who would most likely end up in this same situation for one reason or another and who have habits and a severe lack of financial and budgeting skills that need changed more than just a little cheaper gas.

I have worked my entire professional life in the banking industry and have had to foreclose on people who could not afford to have increases in their needed expenses such as utilities, transportation, healthcare or food during good times, economically speaking. These are the same people who could have absorbed these needed increases if they had merely given up cable TV or their \$150 per month cell phone. This is the same issue we are facing today. Some sacrifices will need to be made by Joe Average but Joe ought to be able to cut back on non-necessities and absorb the extra costs. If Joe Average refuses to make the changes to his daily habits, then we should not bail him out of a situation that he put himself in and refuses to change his ways in order to get out of.

The belief I have is that \$4-5 gas will actually be a major savior not only to the US but to the human race as a whole. The high prices will force us to innovate and bring technologies that have been available for years into the mainstream, to decrease our overall use of non-renewable energy and decrease our pollution levels. Even if one does not buy into the notion of global warming, we all know that breathing pollution is extremely harmful and expensive in terms of healthcare costs. Many pollution problems can be solved at the same time as our energy problems.

Significantly more money, in the multiple tens or hundreds of billions of dollars, needs to be spent on emerging energy-efficient technologies in order to secure a long term solution to energy and pollution problems; not to put a temporary band-aid on gas prices to win over a few votes. The peoples of the world look to the US to be a leader and innovator of new technologies and we have been sorely lacking for many years.

Most European countries and Japan are vastly further ahead both on efficiency and pollution control standards. We have many bright scientists, engineers and entrepreneurs in this country who have the ideas, goals and desires to accomplish this task; what they lack is the financial access to get the ideas into large-scale production. The U.S. vitally needs an effort on the scale of the Manhattan Project or the Apollo Program to get technology from its infancy and

early adopter stages into a mature industry. These changes will in no doubt be hard on the existing industries and infrastructures as they make the changes needed to accomplish this but the long term effects are going to be felt for many generations to come and deserve to be done right. This is not something that affects just the US, rich or poor or election results; these changes need to be made for the entire human race across the globe. The US has a chance to be the world leader once again. If you wish to see some of these technologies and how they can help people, pick up the July 2008 edition of Popular Science Magazine and see what is already being done and what can be done to ensure an energy independent, energy efficient and clean way of life.

In the short term, times will be tough for many Americans and many people across the world as fuel, food and needed goods prices increase. We are a tough people and we will make the changes in our daily lives in the short term to get by, most will have very little actual changes to our lifestyles. What the American people and all people need is a change in their way of life, change in transportation, our choice of energy and our way of thinking. A great deal of the needed technologies are already developed and merely need help getting into the mainstream while others desperately need funding and qualified help to transform ideas into products. This is where the government needs to step in and be a leader and savior by starting large scale programs tackling energy, efficiency and pollution problems not pumping more oil or subsidizing inefficient ethanol for a short term quick fix.

Please step forward not just as an Idahoan or an American but as a leader of all people who honestly wants to promote the greater good for all and get legislation moving to enact large scale technological programs and set aside large scale funding in the tens or hundreds of billions of dollars to help lead the American people and the rest of the world into a brighter new future.

MATT, Boise.

It is my opinion that we as a nation need to take our undying focus off of this petroleum problem and start shopping around for a better, clearer, abundant and renewable resource that can be used for fuel. It bothers me to see gas going up so fast and always asking myself "when will it end?" and know that so much of our tax money is [thrown] away on programs very few of us proffer from. I am not saying that all the nation's programs are pointless, but most can use a good trim. So please explain to me why you would rather fight Congress on the matter of lower fuel costs and not push alternative fuels that so many of our own citizens can grow? And what ever happened to hydrogen? Was that too obvious of a choice that it got pushed aside? Or is it because it is so abundant that no one could get rich off of it? It just makes me sick to see where we are headed. So I will pretend that you actually read this email and listened and you pretend to be keeping our best interests in mind.

A worried citizen of the richest Nation on Earth,

Daniel.

My son, with a family of seven, lives in Las Vegas and, because of high gas prices, is now biking the eight miles to work in over 100 degrees to save on gas. Their monthly fuel budget has skyrocketed to \$400 per month. My daughter works 30 miles away from her home for an auto dealership. They have continually cut workers because people are not buying cars due to the gas prices. They have recently cut a skeleton staff down to four days a week to conserve on the gas expended.

My husband and I are retired and are planning no new future trips due to the expended fuel. I have never seen such an economy. We are told that milk (a staple food) will soon be \$5 per gallon. How can growing families afford this? We will soon be down to bread and water with the skyrocketing prices. We are thoroughly fed up with both political parties for allowing the nation to come to such a state. There is trouble in every sector of the market but no one will do what is right for the nation at large. All I can see is a downward deep spiral of trouble ahead.

Thank you for listening.

RANDA, Rigby.

Here is what is going on here in Idaho and in other states as well. A lot of Americans live in rural areas. We have to get in our autos and drive rather it is to the work school groceries. As for me, I live behind the Pocatello airport, and drive 12 miles into the railroad depot to go to work. My wife teaches school in American Falls, which is 28 miles from home. Right now the summer school teachers are riding the school bus from Bannock Peak truck stop into American Falls, which really helps out. I live in eastern Power County, so back and forth [with] school activities etc.

With high gas prices, I can only see it getting worse. It is not like as in other countries [like] Europe, etc., where I can step out my front door and get on the bus. [If I could] ride my bike, I would; but we cannot so therefore I am trapped into paying high gas prices. If gas was to go to \$10 a gallon, we would be down and out stuck! What is this country going to do? We have got some real energy problems in this country and it could take us down, recession or even depression. Even the Union Pacific is affected by it; they will not even let me out notch 5 on the throttle. Fuel, fuel, fuel and the cost of fuel.

MERLIN, Pocatello.

Energy prices are certainly affecting many far and wide in the U.S. Yet the writing is clearly on the wall and we, as a country, must act quickly to adapt to a new energy world.

We can no longer afford "business as usual" policies that heavily favor supply-side issues (extraction and generation). We must look upon the tried and true principles of saving (conservation) and diversification (alternative energies). Both these strategies must be wholly embraced by elected officials such as you if the country is to be lead out of a worsening energy crisis and on to a path toward prosperity.

While generating more traditional fuels (oil) can help, it is a short-term solution at best. Our 100+ year binge on fossil fuel is now coming to a close. We must choose how this transition will take place. It is clear that global demand is outpacing global supplies, given the best scientific (not political) assessments. While technology holds a great deal of promise, it is clear that no such magic tech bullet yet exists. We can no longer afford to stick our heads in the sand.

We need to grab this energy lever with both hands—one for conservation and one for clean alternative energy—and open the door to a new, more competitive America. Anything short of this exposed our country to great risk and makes a mockery of our independence, our innovation, our global leadership and our ability to recreate our future.

I hope you fully appreciate the decisions that face this country and will choose to take leadership role in ushering in a new day for America. The eyes of Idaho are upon you.

CRAIG, Ketchum.

As a small business owner in welding, the sharp rise in steel and gas have hit me hard.

I have to use gas for my welder when in the field and electricity will be a problem in my small shop. I do not know if you are aware of the prices of steel, but all across the board I pay more than double for steel, welding rod and related items. Since my product is made of steel, it's putting a huge bite in my ability to make ends meet, let alone trying to get ahead. It is hitting me hard enough to make me wonder how long before I have to fold.

It is nonsense that we have all the resources in this great land to meet our needs without dependence on foreign supplies of oil, but we are forbidden by agencies that are run, it seems, by fanatics who have their own agenda and it is not the welfare of the people who keep this country going. Why are we not able to utilize our own oil fields and drill for oil when we know where it is. I do not understand. It is like watching a bunch of school kids fighting over who gets to kick the ball first and for how many times when I see all the nonsense going on in Washington.

Thanks for not being one of the spoiled brats in our nation's capital.

BRIAN.

Yes, gas prices have affected us dramatically. We are farmers and thus live in a rural environment. With the rising fuel prices, making a profit on our crops is extremely difficult. As diesel rises, so do fertilizers and herbicides and pesticides. They are three times more expensive than three years ago. Freight for hauling crops is way up, and so forth. Driving takes a huge bite out of our budget even though we have cut back as much as we can. Remember when America was first settled and they refused to buy from England so that they would start to be productive and self-reliant as a nation? Well, it worked did it not? We became the richest and most prosperous Nation on earth. We do not need other nations to survive. We can produce what we use ourselves. We have got ourselves into this mess and we can get out. Get Congress, the President and the Supreme Court to stick with the specific responsibilities assigned to them by the Constitution. Allow the free market to work as it should. (Read Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations. The Founding Fathers relied on this wisdom.) It would be sticky for a while but Americans have always been tough. If we want America to survive then we have to fix the problem. The Constitution has the answers. America will crumble if we do not take serious action. Thank you for your efforts!

MARYLYNNE.

I am writing this in response to your letter on energy. I live in a rural area, approximately 8 miles from the town of Preston. Because of the distances involved in daily commuting and other required driving, our fuel bill has more than doubled in the last two years. Last month it was in excess of \$500.00. Gas has since risen more than .20 per gallon.

Income is not matching the rapid increase in cost of fuel and this has greatly reduced the amount of discretionary money that we have. Most of my neighbors have stated the same. Those that have the least amount to spare are the ones that are being hardest hit by the rising energy costs.

The federal government should allow and encourage all forms of energy production: drilling for oil in the Gulf and Alaska; relaxed regulations and tax breaks for new refineries; streamlined permit process for new nuclear power plants. The list is as endless as is the regulations that have been imposed on the energy companies.

Thank you for your time.

MIKE, Preston.

I receive an email stating that you would like to have Idahoans tell their stories about

rising oil prices. I am a single mother of three, working full-time as it is, but now thinking about taking on another job because of the cost of gas. Our family has tried to plan a week visit to the coast for the past few years, and the cost of gas has controlled our plans! This is taking a toll on my budget and our family, knowing that every month, there is never any extra. The other option for me is to turn to a welfare program. Which is more beneficial—more people on welfare or using our oil reserves? What makes it most frustrating is that the United States has the oil! Help us out. I would like to travel somewhere with my children before they are grown up and gone.

SOPHIA, *Pocatello*.

With regards to your recent query about the effect of the gas prices on our family: yes, the high prices have forced changes on our family. We now combine trips to save fuel, and I now commute to work by bicycle three times a week and am losing weight doing it. We are putting much more pressure on management to allow telecommuting.

Are these all bad things? Is this a drastic problem? No, actually this is most probably a good thing. For the first time in years we, as a nation, are using less gas. While it will definitely have an impact on our lifestyle, the problem can be mitigated by lifestyle changes (carpooling, mass transit, cycling, downsizing to smaller vehicles). There are many ways to do this and virtually every nation in the world besides the U.S. has done it.

The real concern is two-fold, both of which can be considered failures by our elected officials. First, the lack of affordable mass transit. For years, our leaders have refused to lead on this situation and instead buried their heads in the sand, preferring to believe that gas will always be at \$1/gallon. Something like a 50c/gallon tax years ago would have provided for an efficient infrastructure, reduced the demand and possibly reduced the current price increases.

The second failure is the misguided use of ethanol in the attempt to pretend that we are actually doing something to reduce our emissions. This is in reality nothing more than a subsidy to agri-business at the cost of increased food prices. Corn ethanol is nothing but a smokescreen that is contributing to increased food prices. If we are serious about ethanol, then let us import sugar cane and make the ethanol from the cane, or, even better, let us create ethanol plants in the countries that grow the sugar cane. That way we would be helping these countries, most of which are dirt poor, provide employment and earn hard currency. In turn, we would reduce our emissions without adding to the food price increases.

Yes, I know that you wanted a lot of whine-a-grams so that you could parade them in front of Congress and try and open the Arctic Refuge to drilling to benefit the oil companies, even though they are making obscene profits, but maybe we should look at reality. Drilling offshore and in the Arctic will not reduce prices. Oil companies have found that people can afford \$4/gallon gas and will manipulate the situation to keep gas prices high. The only real solution is to reduce our consumption. Let us provide business with incentives for telecommuting and usage of green energy. Let us provide communities with help and incentives for the creation of bike-paths as well as options like light rail etc.

This way we can provide for the future, reduce emissions, reduce demand for gas and in turn reduce oil and food prices. But in order to do this we need to look beyond the old mentality that got us here. Drill and consume, drill and consume is no longer going

to work. It will provide nothing more than a short term minimal respite.

We look to you as one of our leaders to promote a long-term viable solution. Thank you for your time in considering this.

ROBERT.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO DR. JOEL M. LEVY

• Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I wish to pay tribute to a truly inspirational New York figure, Dr. Joel M. Levy, on the occasion of his retirement from the YAI/National Institute for People with Disabilities Network, NIPD, after 40 years of dedicated leadership of the organization.

Over this time, Dr. Levy has spearheaded the development of YAI/NIPD from a small and struggling agency into one of the Nation's leading providers of service for people of all ages with developmental and learning disabilities. In particular it is at the forefront of understanding and treatment of autism.

He has played a pivotal role in leading the social revolution which has transformed the landscape of the disabilities field and which has dramatically improved the lives of thousands upon thousands of individuals and families.

Dr. Levy's tireless efforts have created countless opportunities for those with developmental disabilities to experience greater independence, productivity, and joy through community living, meaningful employment, and volunteer activities. Furthermore, he has ensured that persons with disabilities have access to quality health care, in turn promoting their physical, mental and overall well-being.

And of great importance, Dr. Levy has positioned YAI/NIPD as an internationally acclaimed professional organization renowned for its conferences, training materials, research, and publications in this field.

In the course of his distinguished career he has clearly created a Place of Hope for all people with developmental and learning disabilities and their families.

I feel privileged on behalf of all New Yorkers to have this opportunity to salute and commend the outstanding achievements of Dr. Levy. •

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mrs. Williams, 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 Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

EXECUTIVE REPORT OF COMMITTEE

The following executive report of a nomination was submitted:

By Mr. DORGAN for the Committee on Indian Affairs.

*Yvette Roubideaux, of Arizona, to be Director of the Indian Health Service, Department of Health and Human Services, for the term of four years.

*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. NELSON of Florida (for himself, Mr. MARTINEZ, Mr. GREGG, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. INOUE, Mr. VITTER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. KAUFMAN, and Mr. BINGAMAN):

S. 951. A bill to authorize the President, in conjunction with the 40th anniversary of the historic and first lunar landing by humans in 1969, to award gold medals on behalf of the United States Congress to Neil A. Armstrong, the first human to walk on the moon; Edwin E. "Buzz" Aldrin Jr., the pilot of the lunar module and second person to walk on the moon; Michael Collins, the pilot of their Apollo 11 mission's command module; and, the first American to orbit the Earth, John Herschel Glenn Jr; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Ms. SNOWE (for herself, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. VITTER, Mr. CARDIN, Ms. LANDRIEU, and Mrs. BOXER):

S. 952. A bill to develop and promote a comprehensive plan for a national strategy to address harmful algal blooms and hypoxia through baseline research, forecasting and monitoring, and mitigation and control while helping communities detect, control, and mitigate coastal and Great Lakes harmful algal blooms and hypoxia events; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. HARKIN:

S. 953. A bill to provide for the establishment of programs and activities to increase influenza vaccination rates through the provision of free vaccines; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. KERRY (for himself and Mr. LUGAR):

S. 954. A bill to authorize United States participation in the replenishment of resources of the International Development Association, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. KERRY (for himself and Mr. LUGAR):

S. 955. A bill to authorize United States participation in, and appropriations for the United States contribution to, the African Development Fund and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative, to require budgetary disclosures by multilateral development banks, to encourage multilateral development banks to endorse the principles of the Extractive