

the stalemate in Washington. The biggest problem is no one is listening to any of the experts on our problems. Everyone just blunders ahead whether anything makes sense or not. We are going to keep spending like there is no tomorrow and then turn around and give people tax refunds. Where did we find the math that makes that work? I could go on and on for days, [but it does not appear to make any difference to our political leaders.]

DAVE.

If it is not already in the works, please consider sponsoring a bill to raise the IRS mileage deduction. It is now at 50½ cents per mile, which is inadequate given the increases in gas, oil, tires, and other related auto products. I am a small business owner in Bonner County, and I travel nearly seven days per week to service clients. Some days I am all over this very large county! Though I usually drive a Honda Civic, even it is becoming expensive to drive. If I raise my prices, I will surely lose some business. Many other business owners are suffering, too.

LXIE.

First, as for fuel prices. I am sure you have heard most all opinions on how to attempt to solve this issue. I believe there needs to be both short-term and long-range solutions. For the short term, off-shore and North Slope oil drilling needs to be allowed to provide some near-term relief on fuel prices. In addition, new refineries need to be allowed/encouraged in the U.S. as soon as possible. Long term—there needs to be an all-out funding of R&D to provide renewable energy for both transportation and to sustain our homes. I believe in this great nation we can harness the energy of the sun, etc. to provide unlimited renewable energy.

Also another issue close to home is jobs. It is very disturbing the rate at which we are losing jobs to India, etc. due to outsourcing. The corporate environment today is to save a buck at any cost, even sending jobs to under-developed countries. At my place of business, we have seen over the last seven years, many, many technology jobs go out of the country. In addition, just recently, it was announced that many clerical jobs are also to be outsourced. What is happening is that the better-paying jobs are being sent out of the country, and we are left with the lower-paying service industry jobs and are very quickly lowering the American standard of living. Also, this is also happening during tough economic times along with the rising energy costs.

It seems that Congress and our countries leadership is more concerned with everyone else around the world except our own citizens. In this area, there needs to be some kind of tax penalty/incentive to keep these jobs here, in America. If there is no economic benefit to outsource, the jobs will come back.

BEN, *Parma*.

Thanks for being interested in energy; our family sees the future as pretty bleak. Return to the Carter years, high energy prices, stagflation, no raises, general depression. We have upped our level pay on natural gas, expecting the price to double. We have rearranged our budget, less food and entertainment, etc. Far less travel. But I have to ask [if there are not some of our political leaders who want the U.S. economy to slow down. They view this as a way to stop lifestyles they consider wasteful.]

DAVE and MIEKE, *Pocatello*.

My biggest [worry is] fuel that we cannot afford. It is nice for our salary to go up, too. But if you only make \$8 an hour or less, it is really tough to go anywhere and even going

to work, and if you have a gas-eating vehicle, the pay is gone. How can we afford to live and a smile on your face when you put all your paycheck for the gas? Our country has to do something about this situation. When my kids asked me to go to practice for tennis, I say no, I could not afford the gas. It is very sad to see the face of my kids. And I know that it is not just me suffering for this issue. There are many more that cannot afford to even get groceries for their families. I hope that our government will do something to help our country, too.

EDITH, *Nampa*.

I began my professional career as a Forester in 1961 and have witnessed a massive change in Forest management and the timber industry. Currently my closest job involves driving 100 miles roundtrip to my closest job. I must drive a four-wheel drive pickup due to forest roads and occasional seedlings, tools etc. I would love to drive a more fuel economic vehicle but as you can see this is not an option. In terms of my business, transportation is extremely costly and typically log and pulpwood haulers charge in excess of \$2/mile to haul their product. Today it is not uncommon for a surcharge to be added.

The big push in my business today is to remove forest waste as biomass to be used as an energy source and the biggest obstacle is the cost of transporting this material out of the woods economically.

The American people with the help of Congress must address this energy crisis immediately. The answer in my opinion is to commence exploration and oil recovery (drilling) immediately, build new refining capacity, and develop and utilize alternative sources such as nuclear, hydroelectric, wind, solar, tidal, etc. I do not see this as an "either/or" situation. We need a blend of all of the aforementioned to keep our ever-expanding population and economy healthy and vibrant.

I am involved with an invention that converts forest slash into a fine powder. This machine/process reduces weight and volume by roughly 40%, has fertilizer value, food value, and appears to be the breakthrough for the cellulosic production of ethanol. I have a report describing this invention that I would be willing and eager to share with you or your representative in Boise at your convenience.

LEWIS, *Eagle*.

My wife and I have recently started a small business in Idaho. Outrageous gas prices are making it hard to get this young company off the ground. My wife has quit her job of six years to finish school full-time at BSU. We figured we could live comfortably without her income but with the gas prices constantly rising we are getting a little uncomfortable about our decision. We feel that Congress needs to do something immediately to help the working people of this country.

SAM, *Nampa*.

I work in southern Idaho at the Idaho National Lab and the lab workers who work way out in the desert work a four-day work week. This helps keep the price to commute low. We here in town work a 9X80 schedule. It would behoove us to look at making the standard work week four days, possibly. I had seen on the news that a couple of the other states have enacted that legislation. Here in Idaho, where we have such wide open expanses and so far to drive in many cases, it could potentially save a lot of money.

MELISSA, *Ammon*.

I am a 68-year-old taxpaying American citizen, and military veteran. I work in Spo-

kane, Washington. It is getting increasingly more difficult to afford the gas to drive to and from work. Carpooling or the use of public transportation is out of the question as I work in the construction industry on various jobs throughout the Spokane area. It appears that some elected people in Congress are letting the environmental lobbyists and their corrupt judges run our country.

The time has come to start drilling for oil in Alaska, Colorado, Wyoming, and offshore. From what has been in the news and from what we read in various publications, all from very intelligent engineers and scientists, we know the oil is there. We have shale deposits in several states that we could be using. We need to work harder on wind and nuclear power. The states want to drill, and we need to lift the federal bans.

We should either sell or give the abandoned military bases to companies willing to build refineries on them. The time has come to quit asking—it is time to demand that this be done. We have the resources, let us use them. The United States of America should not have to go begging to other countries for oil when we have it within our own shores.

We, the people, should not be suffering these exorbitant prices due to the incompetence in all areas of our government, and speculators in the stock market.

WAYNE, *Coeur d'Alene*.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING WEST ANCHORAGE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

● Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, I am proud to announce a class from West Anchorage High School represented the State of Alaska by winning national distinction at the National We The People: The Citizen and the Constitution National Finals. These outstanding students, through their knowledge of the U.S. Constitution, won Alaska's statewide competition and earned the chance to come to our Nation's Capital and compete at the national level.

This competition involved a 3-day academic competition simulating a congressional hearing in which students demonstrate their knowledge and skills as they evaluate, take, and defend positions on historical and contemporary constitutional issues.

The students from West Anchorage High School were the Nation's top performers in the competition's unit on How the Values and Principles Embodied in the Constitution Shaped American Institutions and Practices. This year is the 50th year of Alaska's statehood and while we may be one of the youngest States, the performance of these students is indicative of the unique contributions Alaska has made to America's institutions and practices.

I had the distinction of meeting these students so it makes me even more proud to recognize them on behalf of the State of Alaska. The names of these outstanding students from West Anchorage High School are: Grace Abbott, Sinivevela Aho, Spencer Bailly, Gizelle Baylon, Colby Bleicher, Blake Young, Jacqueline Braden, Santana

Chamberlain, Caitlin Cheely, Jon Derman Harris, Christa Eussen, Christina Hendrickson, Ryan Hunte, Terra Laughton, Logan Miller, Jasmine Neeno, Madeleine Overturf, Luke Park, Cassandra Smith, Krista Soderlund, Chelsea Thompson, Lucia Valencia, Stacy Wheeler, Sophie Wiepking-Brown, Amanda Xayasane, and Ethan Zinck.

I also commend the teacher of the class, Pamela Orme, who is responsible for preparing these young constitutional experts for the national finals. Also worthy of special recognition are Maida Buckley, the State coordinator, and Todd Heuston, the district coordinator, who are responsible for implementing the We the People program in Alaska.

I congratulate these young "constitutional experts" on their outstanding achievement and for their proud representation of the State of Alaska.●

TRIBUTE TO LOUISIANA WWII VETERANS

● Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I am proud to honor a group of 120 World War II veterans from all over Louisiana who will travel to Washington, DC, on May 9 to visit the various memorials and monuments that recognize the sacrifices of our Nation's invaluable servicemembers.

Louisiana HonorAir, a group based in Lafayette, LA, sponsored this trip to the Nation's Capital. The organization is honoring each surviving World War II Louisiana veteran by giving them an opportunity to see the memorials dedicated to their service. The veterans will visit the World War II, Korea, Vietnam and Iwo Jima memorials. They will also travel to Arlington National Cemetery.

This is the third of four flights Louisiana HonorAir is making to Washington, DC, this spring. It is the 16th flight to depart from Louisiana, which has sent more HonorAir flights than any other state to the Nation's Capital.

World War II was one of America's greatest triumphs but was also a conflict rife with individual sacrifice and tragedy. More than 60 million people worldwide were killed, including 40 million civilians, and more than 400,000 American servicemembers were slain during the long war. The ultimate victory over enemies in the Pacific and in Europe is a testament to the valor of American soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines. The years 1941 to 1945 also witnessed an unprecedented mobilization of domestic industry, which supplied our military on two distant fronts.

In Louisiana, there remain today more than 33,000 living WWII veterans, and each one has a heroic tale of achieving the noble victory of freedom over tyranny. This group had 44 veterans who served in the U.S. Army, 27 in the U.S. Air Force, 42 in the Navy, 3 in the Coast Guard and 4 in the Marines.

Our heroes trekked the world for their country. They fought in Germany, France, Italy, Africa, Japan, Guam, Guadalcanal, China, Okinawa, the Philippines, New Guinea, Korea, Thailand, and Saipan. Their journeys included the invasions of North Africa, Sicily and Normandy, and the Battle of the Bulge. Their fight for freedom extended to New Caledonia and the Solomon Islands.

One of our Army Airborne veterans navigated a glider plane and became a prisoner of war. He also lost a brother during the D-day invasion and earned many awards, including the Purple Heart. One of our Army Air Corps veterans flew 50 European missions in a B-24 bomber as a flight engineer. Another of our Army Air Corps heroes flew 20 missions as a tail gunner in a B-17 Flying Fortress. And one of our Navy veterans fought at Pearl Harbor.

I ask the Senate to join me in honoring these 120 veterans, all Louisiana heroes, who will visit Washington, and Louisiana HonorAir for making these trips a reality.●

TRIBUTE TO CADILLAC MOUNTAIN SPORTS

● Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, with the weather beginning to warm up, Mainers and tourists alike are preparing to once again head outdoors and enjoy the beauty that our State has to offer. I rise this week to highlight the work one small business—Cadillac Mountain Sports—is doing to ensure that outdoorsmen and women have the gear and tools they need to make the most of their outings.

Cadillac Mountain Sports was founded in May 1989 by Matthew Curtis. Mr. Curtis set up his small shop in busy downtown Bar Harbor, a summer haven for those visiting Acadia National Park. His intention, however, was to build a year-round sports store that served both members of the local community and the region's seasonal visitors. The store initially carried a wide variety of equipment for a host of individual sports and fitness activities, from swimming and tennis to running and aerobics. It soon widened its product line to include hiking, rock climbing, and backpacking equipment.

Immensely popular from the outset, the business soon needed to significantly increase its space. Mr. Curtis moved his business to a larger location across the street after just 2 years, doubling its size and allowing the company to grow its product line. Since then, the company has undergone several expansions and renovations. Additionally, over the years, Cadillac has expanded to become a five-store chain, with four locations in downtown Bar Harbor, and one in nearby Ellsworth. Its line includes Cadillac's Patagonia, Cadillac's The North Face, and Cadillac's Nike, which all sell those particular brands' products. Cadillac now employs 30 people during the slow season, a number that rises to 100 people during the summer months.

Cadillac Mountain Sports is grounded in the communities where it is located, and strives to improve the quality of living in those towns. Cadillac was recently instrumental in supporting the Ellsworth High Street Beautification Program to revamp its downtown area. Additionally, Cadillac utilizes a number of "green" business practices, including recycling programs. As a result of its considerable efforts to improve the town's well being, Cadillac Mountain Sports will be presented with the 2009 "Top Drawer" Award by the Ellsworth Area Chamber of Commerce at the organization's 54th annual meeting on Thursday, May 14, 2009.

The "Top Drawer" Award is presented annually to either a business or person that makes a lasting contribution to the development and improvement of the greater Ellsworth region. The award was founded in 1980 to commemorate the late Tom Caruso, who established Bar Harbor Airlines to "Link Maine With The World."

It is clear that Cadillac Mountain Sports, with its solid and intelligent commitment to the customer and the community, is highly worthy of this recognition. A small business that has grown to become a regional leader in the sale of sports equipment, Cadillac is a prime example of the success that comes with hard work, community involvement, and customer responsiveness. Congratulations to Matthew Curtis and everyone at Cadillac Mountain Sports for winning the 2009 "Top Drawer" Award, and best wishes for continued success.●

TRIBUTE TO MATT GIRAUD

● Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, today I pay tribute, on behalf of myself and Senator LEVIN, to Matt Giraud of Kalamazoo, MI.

Each week on "American Idol," Matt sang his heart out and inspired many throughout Michigan. Early on, the judges recognized his incredible talent. Despite nearly being eliminated in the early stages of the competition, Matt rebounded with grace, confidence, and poise. His songs were a moving reminder of the toughness and resilience of our State.

Matt was born and raised in Michigan. He went to high school in Ypsilanti and graduated from Western Michigan University. Before he went on "American Idol," he performed at a dueling piano bar in Kalamazoo. And on the show, he never forgot his roots.

He got the opportunity to work with Smokey Robinson, the "King of Motown," during the show's Motown episode. His rendition of "Let's Get it On" deeply impressed Robinson, the show's judges, and the audience.

When he was faced with elimination in April, the judges, for the first time in the show's history, intervened to save a contestant. He came back strong the next week, singing "Stayin' Alive." His enthusiasm in spite of adversity was a real inspiration to his fans across Michigan.