

merging scores of agencies and programs—the largest government reorganization in half a century. Secretary Chertoff has moved the Department to the next level, where it now has a focused, long-term strategy clarifying the Department's priorities, roles, and responsibilities, as well as those of other key Federal, State, and local partners. He has worked tirelessly to ensure an integrated and overarching vision of how the government will tackle its role of defending the homeland.

We have much work ahead to transform the Department into a mature agency whose whole is greater than the sum of its parts. But we have made steady progress. The threat of natural disasters is ongoing and the threat of terrorism remains with us. As I have often said, these are not ordinary times. They demand extraordinary commitment from those who have chosen public service. Secretary Chertoff has given our country his extraordinary commitment, and he will be well and gratefully remembered for it.

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF HOSTELLING INTERNATIONAL USA

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment today to recognize the 75th anniversary of Hostelling International USA. Since 1934, Hostelling International USA has helped facilitate travel within the United States by the world's youth and promoted intercultural understanding. As part of the international hostelling movement, this organization has helped Americans to experience different parts of their own country and helped international travelers to better understand our unique and proud history, people, and way of life.

The sharing of cultures that naturally occurs in a hostel helps people to better understand and identify with others of various backgrounds. Instead of retreating to a hotel room every night, travelers in a hostel are literally living beside and interacting with fellow travelers from other countries. Several of my staff have stayed in hostels while traveling, and I know their experiences have helped shape their ability to appreciate different cultures and points of view. In this respect, it is the small, everyday human interactions that can have the biggest impact, like encountering someone who may not speak English and learning to communicate or sharing favorite foods among an international group of travelers.

In my home State of Iowa, the Northeast Iowa Council of Hostelling International USA has provided activities for youth and adults alike in Postville and surrounding communities since 1975. I am glad that Iowans have the benefit of this programming to give a greater understanding of the world and its people to residents who may not have had a chance to travel widely. I am also glad that Hostelling Inter-

national USA continues to provide the opportunity for people from around the world, and especially young people, to see the real America firsthand and meet the American people. This is the best way to build good will across the globe, and I congratulate Hostelling International USA for its 75 years of service.

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:

I am an Idaho youth, currently learning how to drive, but due to the ridiculously high gas prices it is not as much fun as I was expecting it to be. Because of these prices I feel bad about doing something I need to know how to do. I am also a musician and because of that I am constantly going to rehearsals and performances and need to drive in order to get where I need to be. I do in fact carpool but because most of the people I would carpool with also have very busy schedules it is extremely hard to coordinate. Not only must I travel to get to my rehearsals and performances but I am also a transfer student at my school due to their spectacular music program. Because I am not in the school's boundary it is quite a distance for me to travel two ways every day. Simply because I have a passion for music and want to pursue a career in it I must break not only my own but also my parents' wallets. Due to my age many people will not hire me so it is quite a financial strain seeing as how I do not make an income, and only so many people need a babysitter.

I personally would greatly appreciate if the government would take the time and money to look into alternative renewable energy sources. Not only can we do that on a national level but on a more local level we could create more public transportation systems. The only place we have anything is in Boise, and I, as well as many others, live in Meridian. If there was a bus or light rail that I could get on in my town and travel to Boise or Nampa, and anywhere in between, I assure you I would use it. And, I'm pretty positive that I'm not the only person who would. Not only would this save many people's wallets but it would also be very handy for those of

us who are yet to be licensed. Not to mention that the reduced number of cars would lower pollution levels greatly. Please look into a public transportation system locally. It would be greatly appreciated by many, and thank you for finally giving the people more of a voice on the issue and for bringing attention to the Congress.

BRITTAN CHASTAINE.

I assume you have already seen this website dollargas.us. It seems to me that as a nation we are not only in serious debt, but we are allowing ourselves to be put in "bondage" by other countries needlessly. I am angry and frustrated that we are not more assertive in addressing this problem.

We have a family of nine children all are on their own. Some are married and have young families as well as trying to get through college. As you know, job wages are not very substantial in college towns for students. The increase in the cost of fuel is driving other costs up as well. These young adults are trying very hard to make ends meet and it is becoming more difficult for them to live within their means. Wages are not keeping up with the cost of living. This is forcing mothers out of the home and children which is not in the best interest of the family.

The rising cost of fuel is also precluding their visits to our home as well as our visits to their homes. The visits are the short range effect but the long range effect is grandchildren having less interaction with grandparents which further weakens the family structure. The family is the basic unit of society and as the family weakens the values of society and our nation are also weakened. There is strength, honor, value and a sense of duty in knowing personal heritage.

Our livelihood is farming, luckily we have enough fuel which was bought two years ago and hopefully will finish out the needs for this year. It is a tragedy that farms are being sold and subdivisions are taking over good Idaho farm ground. Rising fuel costs and fertilizer prices are becoming a serious burden.

I do hope you will strongly support opening and drilling domestic oil resources as well as other technologies that provide efficient energy alternatives.

Thank you for your time. Thank you for listening. Please represent the state of Idaho in finding ways to cut rising fuel and energy costs.

CHERYL OKELBERRY.

My husband is a Viet Nam veteran who retired after 30 years with the Boise Police Department. I have worked all my life so when he was eligible for retirement, we had saved and planned and we were in a good position to do so. In the five years since he retired, we have seen our insurance premiums rise over \$400 per month to \$1,020 per month, and we know that is a bargain! Because of oil prices, grocery prices are rising, Idaho Power just raised their rates, the gas company is sure to follow and fuel prices have made it almost prohibitive to travel except in necessity. We have a little place in the mountains and to get there now costs \$90+ just to enjoy a weekend away from the heat and noise in Boise. Our nest egg is dwindling, and we are stuck in the house watching it disappear! And we are far luckier than most—we don't have to choose between food and gas, yet.

Saudi Arabia says they make money at \$70 per barrel; why is the price \$130? The government has so mismanaged its own affairs that we find ourselves at the mercy of speculators and oil sheiks who don't like us much anyway. We have been so short sighted that we haven't the refineries to process oil even if

you do allow drilling in the Arctic or offshore. While France gets 80% of its power from nuclear plants, we languish and waste costly oil to light and power our homes when Nuclear power would do the job for pennies comparatively. We need a "Manhattan Project"—throw the weight of the government and the best minds behind getting nuclear facilities on line, build new refineries, develop methods for cleaner burning coal. Stop arguing about which side of the aisle is the right side, and do something for the people you were elected to represent.

PENNY TAYLOR, *Boise.*

Thank you for taking the time to hear my input on fuel prices. I hope this letter reaches the ears of your fellow Senators. I own and operate a small business with one truck. I spend approximately \$700 each time I fill my truck with diesel. This occurs about 3-4 times per month. I also own and operate heavy equipment which costs about \$800 to \$1,000 per month to fuel. I have raised my prices slightly, however, work is scarce. Raising prices too high will result in loss of work. It appears that many people in government do not care about their constituents. Do you pay for fuel? How about health care? Maybe we ought to vote on whether you and your fellow senators should receive a fuel allowance and free health care on taxpayers' money. Maybe then, you can get your heads back out where the sun is shining! It is time to tell the environmentalists to cram it. Start drilling in our own country, providing jobs to our own people, and supplying our own nation with energy. By the way, how is the government going to tax electric cars? Let me guess, raise our electric rates? I guess I could use biodiesel, but it costs more than regular diesel. Oh yeah, big oil cannot profit from biodiesel. Are you going to do anything about the oil speculators? No. Reducing speculation would cut into the retirement accounts of 90 percent of Senators and Congressman. After all, you already have free health care and fuel allowances. Why is it okay for other countries to drill off our coastline, but we cannot? Quite frankly, Senator, no disrespect, but something needs to be done. Enough already. Tell your fellow Senators to do something.

DEVIN.

Gasoline Prices at the Pump—I am sure there are many watch dog groups out there looking at the record breaking profits of the large oil companies, but does DOE or DOJ investigate price fixing, price gouging and record profits of the large oil companies? I am not talking about regulating the oil industry, but just watching out for the average Joe who has no option but "has to grin and bear it" at the pumps.

Miles Per Gallon—Before the fleet MPG average included light trucks and SUVs the automakers call a lot of cars "SUVs" as to not include them in the car category, now that light trucks and SUVs are included in the average, maybe automakers will be forced to work on raising Fleet MPG averages. But the MPG mandates that the government set for Auto Makers to establish for their fleets is still not high enough. Maybe it needs to be revised each and every year and not on the Washington average for change—Ten Years.

On a personal level, I cannot run out and buy a new vehicle that gets 10 percent better MPG. That would cost me 20K in order to save \$500 per year in gas. Maybe if all vehicles had a Green rating (scale of 1-10, one being a ¼ ton PU and 10 being a 40 MPG car) and you got a tax rebate of \$100 times the Green rating of your primary family vehicle.

Example: \$100 times a Green rating of 8 lets you deduct \$800 from your taxes.

Nuclear Power—There is a reason why France generates 80 percent of their elec-

tricity from Nuclear Power, it is a national initiative. In the US, it's left up to large electrical companies to decide whether they can make it work economically before they decide to build the next generation power plants. Remember, what killed the US nuclear industry is not safety, fuel recycling, waste disposal but economics. Look at Seabrook Nuclear Power Plant, its construction was stalled to the point with legal red tape until it would never make a profit for its owners and it never will. What you and other politicians need to do its step forward and mandate DOE to fund, build and operate the next generation nuclear power plant as a National Strategic Initiative. It is essential to the Nations Security as any Military Base, Port Security Effort or any other effort to keep this country safe in the world. If the government does it "strong arm method" and it gets done (on time and with in budget) and it is demonstrated how safe and economically feasible it is, commercial Nuclear Power Plant Building will follow.

Alternative forms of electrical generation either need an increase in their incentives (they almost did not get extended this year) or Carbon Producers (Coal and Oil Power Plant) need higher "Carbon Taxes".

Electrical Reduction at Home—I would love to install new windows in my home, but at \$6,000 to replace all my windows, I need help in the form of tax credits in order to afford it. If the government reinstated many of its programs from the 70's to help pay for home improvements, it would help.

JOHN K., *Ammon.*

I have been traveling back and forth from Burly every weekend for the past couple of years. My ex-husband took my kids from me in the divorce because I could not afford to pay for a lawyer. He then moved from Boise to Burly to be closer to his parents who had moved back to Burly a couple of years earlier. The trip used to cost about sixty dollars to get them and then take them back later. I make the trip so my parents and I can spend time with my children. I have been forced to cut that back to every other week because it costs us almost a hundred dollars each time to go and get them. It breaks my heart.

Now solutions to high gas prices:

For one drill our resources in and around the US. Open up everything: Alaska, the coast, outer continental shelf, everywhere. We need to have both Congress and the President lift their moratoriums on this issue. We must start now because the problem will still exist in five and even ten years. It may get better for a time but it will come back again and again if we don't solve it.

Secondly we need to begin to convert coal and shale to oil. Converting coal to oil is more than sixty-five year old technology. My understanding is that shale is a more recent technology, but very reasonable. We need to have Congress back companies to convert these products to oil with a subsidy that in the event that prices drop below profitable levels that these companies will not be out billions of dollars. OPEC dropped prices last time we attempted to become oil independent. They will do it again. We need to be energy independent regardless of what OPEC does with prices this time or this will happen again.

Lastly develop nuclear power. We need to take our expendable resources away from electric production. Nuclear power is a viable alternative especially considering recent technology advances in this field.

We must take control of our own destiny. Take the power away from foreign countries.

ANGELA.

I am disgusted with our legislators in the federal government. They aren't acting in

our best interests, nor have they for many years. I do not trust them to do right by the U.S. citizens; collectively, greed and the lust for power have become commonplace and acceptable behavior among many legislators.

I retired last year but am going to have to find a part time job to help make ends meet, as prices in general are escalating faster than my fixed income in retirement. I do not have the answers, but I am sure that our legislators own stock in the major oil companies, and that pretty much says it all. Americans are just a big cash cow for our ravenous government to feed upon.

Additionally, I wanted to add something regarding the transit system in the Treasure Valley. I am from Seattle and have seen the problems the Puget Sound area has experienced as a result of rapid growth. The transit system in the Treasure Valley is way behind in its development. The City and county fathers had better do something soon. But the transit system issue doesn't seem to be holding a place of great importance in the development of this area. That's worrisome. There should be more advertising and incentives for people to use the transit system, and more routes made available. Encouraging ridership is important, but it needs to be (and can be) made more convenient and attractive.

Thanks for your time.

GRETCHEN, *Nampa.*

Thank you for your concern about our high energy costs. We are very concerned about this issue because it is hitting our household in two ways. We own a small trucking company and to be truthful, we don't know how much longer we will be able to run. The rising price of diesel is making our profit margin shrink and our own household budget is struggling to make ends meet. It is difficult to expand our budget for the rising energy costs, because the money just isn't there. We are doing the best we can, but it is so frustrating when we feel that our own country is not utilizing its own energy sources. It is time to allow drilling offshore and in our own country for oil and natural gas. We also can further knowledge in alternative energy sources at the same time. Those two ideas should not oppose each other, they can and should both be explored.

Please vote for those measures that would allow both pursuits

Thank you,

RALPH and JULIE MILLER.

I feel very depressed that our country is going down the tubes all being done by the left wing special interests. I would like to see a full blown debate on global warming. Just because the father of the Internet, Al Gore, says it so and the UN agrees does not mean that it is true. We are told all kinds of things that are happening and are suppose to agree when one simple question should be asked: Has it happened before? Why not ask this simple question ask when pictures showing glaciers melting, hurricanes, cyclones, etc.? We need to put all these doomsday projections into perspective. In college I took geology 101 and one of the things that I remember is the world is always changing.

I was also an economics major and was taught about supply and demand. I was taught that if the demand went up and the supply stayed the same, the price went up. I guess that I should have been taught you demagogues it. Do the liberals have one idea on how to increase the supply. I would like to see Republicans stand up and take a strong position that we need to secure our future by drilling. We need to get back to what made the country great. The one thing that makes a country great verses a socialist country is a free market that will sort out

the problem if left free. Republican Party used to stand for something and it needs to again. What happened to small government, sound economic policies, stay out of our way? We have a drug benefit plan but would it be better if they allowed a free market to bring prices down. I used to get my US manufactured meds from Canada but now pay a little less under a Medicare plan. If they can sell in Canada and make money, why not in the US? Why not free trade and competition?

By the way, because of the lack of sun spots we might be going into a little ice age, then what will the politicians do?

Thank you for reading this.

BOB.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-498. A communication from the Assistant Inspector General, Communications and Congressional Liaison, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "DoD IG Report to Congress on Section 357 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008; Review of Physical Security of DoD Installations"; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-499. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency that was declared in Executive Order 13441 with respect to Lebanon; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-500. A communication from the Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Temporary Exemptions for Eligible Credit Default Swaps to Facilitate Operation of Central Counterparties to Clear and Settle Default Swaps" (RIN3235-AK26) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 16, 2009; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-501. A communication from the Executive Director of the Board of Directors, HOPE for Homeowners Program, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "HOPE for Homeowners Program: Program Regulations: Upfront Payment Incentive for Subordinate Mortgage Lien Holders and Other Program Changes" (RIN2580-AA01) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 16, 2009; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-502. A communication from the Attorney, Federal Railroad Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Railroad Safety Enforcement Procedures; Enforcement, Appeal and Hearing Procedures for Rail Routing Decisions" (RIN2130-AB87) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 16, 2009; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-503. A communication from the Secretary of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to an annual plan for the Ultra-Deepwater and Unconventional Natural Gas and Other Petroleum Resources Research and Development Program; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-504. A communication from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Spiromesifen; Pesticide Tolerances" (FRL-

8398-8) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 16, 2009; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-505. A communication from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Quality: Revision to Definition of Volatile Organic Compounds—Exclusion of Propylene Carbonate and Dimethyl Carbonate" (RIN2060-AN75) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 16, 2009; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-506. A communication from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Nevada; Vehicle Inspection and Maintenance Program" (FRL-8748-7) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 16, 2009; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-507. A communication from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Finding of Failure to Submit a Required State Implementation Plan Revision for 1-Hour Ozone Standard, California—San Joaquin Valley—Reasonably Available Control Technology" (FRL-8763-5) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 16, 2009; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-508. A communication from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Finding of Failure to Submit State Implementation Plans Required for the 1997 8-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard; North Carolina and South Carolina" (FRL-8764-8) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 16, 2009; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-509. A communication from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Oil Pollution Prevention; Non-Transportation Related Onshore Facilities" (RIN2050-AG49) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 16, 2009; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-510. A communication from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Operating Permit Programs; Flexible Air Permitting Rule" (RIN2060-AM45) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 16, 2009; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-511. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, an annual report on the Child Support Enforcement Program for fiscal year 2006; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-512. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Evaluation of Phase I of Medicare Health Support Pilot Program Under Traditional Fee-for-Service Medicare: 18-Month Interim Analysis"; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-513. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Interim Guidance under Section 457A" (Notice 2009-8) received in the Office of the President of the Senate

on January 16, 2009; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-514. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Update of Weighted Average Interest Rates, Yield Curves, and Segment Rates" (Notice 2009-2) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 16, 2009; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-515. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Revenue Ruling: 2009 Prevailing State Assumed Interest Rates" (Rev. Rul. 2009-3) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 16, 2009; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-516. A communication from the Staff Attorney, Office of Chief Counsel for Import Administration, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Withdrawal of the Regulatory Provisions Governing Targeted Dumping in Antidumping Duty Investigations" (RIN0625-AA79) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 16, 2009; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-517. A communication from the Chief of the Trade and Commercial Regulations Branch, Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Prohibitions and Conditions for Importation of Burmese and Non-Burmese Covered Articles of Jadeite, Rubies, and Articles of Jewelry Containing Jadeite or Rubies" (RIN1505-AC06) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 16, 2009; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-518. A communication from the Chief of the Trade and Commercial Regulations Branch, Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Import Restrictions Imposed on Certain Archaeological Material from China" (RIN1505-AC08) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 16, 2009; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-519. A communication from the Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs, U.S. Agency for International Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Agency's financial report for fiscal year 2008; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-520. A communication from the Program Manager, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Health Insurance Reform; Modifications to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Electronic Transaction Standards" (RIN0938-AM50) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 16, 2009; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-521. A communication from the Deputy Director for Management, Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to competitive sourcing activities for fiscal year 2008; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-522. A communication from the Director, Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "2008 Report to Congress on the Benefits and Costs of Federal Regulations and Unfunded Mandates on State, Local, and Tribal Entities"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.