

glance at his wall of photographs, an opportunity to hear him talk about his family, and the chance to meet his wife and two daughters, make it clear that Melvin and his wife Kristine Johnson are loving and imaginative parents, and that Melvin's priorities have always been right on the mark. As may often be the case when someone leaves the Senate for the private sector, daughters Katrina and Eliza may find that Dad is able to get home a little earlier to join them at dinner.

With gratitude for his service to the Senate and the Nation, for myself and the many others who have benefited from it, I wish Melvin the best in the time ahead.

RETIREMENT OF H. JAMES SAXTON

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I am honored to rise today in recognition of the Honorable H. James Saxton, on the occasion of his retirement from the U.S. House of Representatives after 24 years of remarkable service to our country.

As a Representative for New Jersey's diverse Third District, Mr. Saxton was truly an advocate not only for his constituents but for New Jersey's interests, as well. Throughout his tenure, he remained an exceptional voice for environmental protection and conservation, and was a fervent advocate for our service men and women and the military bases situated in his district.

Encompassing the Jersey Shore, Pinelands Preservation, suburban communities, and countless areas of open space, the landscape of the Third District is special and complex. Mr. Saxton was a tireless fighter for protecting our waterways, preserving our open spaces, and maintaining the health of our oceans.

While New Jersey is now home to the Nation's first Mega Base, including Fort Dix, McGuire Air Force Base, and Lakehurst Naval Air Engineering Station, such an installation would not be possible without the contributions of Mr. Saxton. Twice the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission chose to close down one of our bases and twice Mr. Saxton defended and defeated the measure. With the many jobs that were saved as a result of this reversal, the new Mega Base will reenergize our communities by adding even more opportunities to the area.

In addition to these and many more accomplishments, Mr. Saxton honorably served on the Armed Services Committee, the Air and Land Forces Subcommittee, the Terrorism and Unconventional Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee, the Natural Resources Committee, the Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, and Oceans, and the Joint Economic Committee. His dedication and commitment on behalf of his constituents has earned him the respect and admiration of his peers and colleagues.

Mr. President, I would like to recognize, commend, and applaud Mr.

Saxton in light of his extraordinary service to the U.S. House of Representatives and his unwavering dedication to the people of New Jersey's Third District.

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:

Why are we still paying foreign aid to the oil-rich [countries]? First, cut off all foreign aid, then charge them \$136 a bushel for the grain we sell them at the present price of \$7. One fact is for certain—when the food starts disappearing from our supermarket shelves, the politicians will see just how fed up we the people really are. I predict that this will be the year of the lowest voter turn-out in the history of this country, as we have no one to choose from for the office of President. Why anyone would want to lead this country into disaster is beyond me. Our government is far too big and corrupt to be changed by a mere vote. Big oil money under the table, personal agendas and the Golden Fleece retirement plan for politicians rule this country. The average citizen has been led to believe that his or her vote matters when it does not. As a sixty-year-old male who has no vision of retirement, and will surely lose my home due to foreclosure, and who will never see Social Security, I, for one, am fed up with this country and [those who seem not to care] about their voters.

GARY, Boise.

The idea of exploring and using our own energy resources is a fantastic idea and should have been done long ago. If we use our own resources, in which we have many (capped oil wells all over Texas, drilling in Alaska, Shale oil (which, by the way, is not as expensive as the oil companies claim; they just do not want to lose the revenue they are getting from the failing and antiquated system they are now using, a better Idea would be to reinstitute government control over energy and utility sectors.) I, for one, would feel a great deal better by keeping American dollars at home instead of paying billions to the oil-rich sheiks of the Mid-east (in which I have no doubt what so ever that some of those funds end up in terrorists

hands.) It is far past the time for American and Americans to take control of our economic and energy future. We have the reserves and resources to do this. The big oil companies have made billions in profit the past couple of years and yet we have not seen nor have we heard anything about refitting the system so the devastation that happened with Katrina does not happen again. Our economy is driven by fuel. Fuel prices go up and the manufacturer pass that cost to the consumer, the consumer is then left with the burden of paying \$3.50 for a gallon of milk, \$2 for a dozen eggs. It was not too long ago that a gallon of gas was \$1.20. Regrettably we will never see that price again. It seems that gas prices do go down but never lower than what it was a year ago.

The big oil companies are making billions while we sit by and "watch" our economy crumble. If measures are not taken to stop this, and I mean measures in the very very very near future (not five years down the road as Sen. McCain is suggesting) I fear that we will find ourselves in the midst of another great depression. Mark my words, sir, the writing is on the wall, but this time we, and by we, I mean the American people, the Senate, and Congress can do something about it. We can start using our resources and support our economy rather than stuffing the linings of those that already have more money than God. When and where does it stop. Foreign countries already own more of America the America does. We are about to have a rude awakening and it will not be a pretty one if steps are not taken to prevent a hostile takeover of American commerce by foreign companies. All driven by the ridiculous and unnecessarily high price of fuel. I believe that it is only 14 percent of all imported fuel is turned into gas and heating oil. If that is true, why is not the cost of plastics and other petroleum-based products not skyrocketing at all? Natural gas is plentiful yet the energy companies say it costs too much to transport it. Solar power is abundant and never-ending, and the technology is fairly inexpensive, yet people do not use it. Idaho has great expanses to set up solar and wind farms. A nuclear energy company is willing to build a plant in Elmore or Owyhee County (I cannot remember which). The nuclear power plant would supply as much as 75 percent of the states, mind you, the state, not a couple of counties but the entire State of Idaho, power needs. Yet no one wants it because of all the disinformation and propaganda. The French had found a way to recycle the spent fuel rods years ago; yet, we still bury ours. The technology is out there and available. We just need to get the big oil companies hands out of the cookie jar so to speak.

I am sorry if it sounds like I am rambling on. I am just a frustrated citizen who is tired of getting the run around from the government as well as big business. Then time for talk has been over for a long time. Now is the time for action.

Thank you and God bless,

JOSE.

I work out of my home/office and not as directly impacted as 99 percent of the folks in America who commute, but our food prices are going up due to the ethanol failed policies as it do not make sense to appease mid-west farmers when more efficient Idaho sugar is better (less votes though for liberals). Here is a good summary from Center for individual freedom: (Please be a Fighter.)

When it comes to the price Americans are paying for gasoline at the pump, will conservative in Congress fight tooth and nail to increase domestic production or will they allow liberals to choke off your supply of oil and increase gas prices even higher?

That is the question that hangs like a storm cloud over each of us . . . over our children . . . and over our grandchildren. Some in Congress have already tried repeatedly to increase the price we pay at the pump, even as the price of a gallon of gasoline rose to more than \$4.00!

As you know, Harry Reid and others in the Senate tried to sneak the Boxer Climate Bill past the American people. That legislation, according to Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell would have raised the price at the pump as much as \$1.40 a gallon—that is on top of the more than \$4 you are already paying!

When the Boxer Climate bill failed, liberals tried again last Tuesday to ram through additional taxes on gasoline. On Thursday, Representative John Peterson proposed a measure that would have lifted the ban on oil exploration in areas between 50 to 200 miles off the United States coast, a restriction that had been in place since 1981! On a straight party-line vote, Democrats on the House Appropriations Subcommittee killed the measure dead!

Then, on Saturday, Senator Barack Obama joined with other Democrats and called for a "windfall profits tax" on gasoline—a tax for which consumers will undoubtedly end up footing the bill!

And make no mistake—some in Congress, bowing to the radical environmental groups that openly support higher gas prices will not quit! They will not stop until they have raised the price of gasoline even more!

But what about conservatives? And what about the American people for that matter? As prices continue to rise at the pump, will they cave to the opposition that is simply using this situation as an excuse to tax us even more? Or will they finally fight?

BRUCE.

I live in rural eastern Idaho. I work a fulltime job to which I commute and I also operate a small cattle ranch. The energy crisis is greatly reducing my expendable income as travel costs have more than doubled and is putting me out of the agricultural business.

The oil prices have increased my operating costs in several aspects. The cost of fertilizer has tripled since last year, so this year I could not afford to put fertilizer on my pasture. The cost of electricity is up 50 percent due to the loss of the BPA credits and increased power generation costs and the cost of gasoline for the trucks and tractors has more than doubled.

Then to make things worse, the nation's efforts to turn corn into fuel have resulted in a reduction in the amount of hay being grown with the result being that the cost of hay to feed my cattle through the winter has more than doubled in the last year to over \$200 dollars a ton.

With the cost of feed up, the cost of cattle has dropped. When all this is added up, there is no profit in my operation. I am at the point where I have to decide if I can subsidize my operation from my salary in hopes that things will even out or I will be forced out of business entirely. I have been in the livestock business for over 30 years, producing food for this nation, and this is the first time I have been faced with going completely out of business.

I saw this crisis coming several years ago and I wonder why my government did not. This country has let the environmental extremists and political expediency push us into the current situation. We have not built a nuclear reactor for decades. We have not built enough refineries, we have not developed our oil and coal deposits. Now we are in a crisis that will continue to get worse because it will take a decade or more to develop the resources and build the infrastruc-

ture if we started today. Projects of this magnitude take forward planning and anticipation, they aren't done overnight.

We cannot survive a decade unless something is done quickly, because the costs will continue to go up and bring the economy to a standstill!

The menial efforts at alternative sources of energy are doing very little and are not the solution. Ethanol is reducing our food production, driving food costs up and still has to be subsidized to make it worth doing. Wind power is noble in the view of some, but will not make a large enough difference to reduce the cost of power.

The oil companies, U.S. and foreign, fertilizer companies and ethanol producers are posting record profits as they rape the income of U.S. citizens. CEOs across the nation are receiving record income, while the average people are lining up at soup kitchens just to stay alive. What is wrong with that picture?

The spineless Congress needs to take on the environmentalists, get past the global warming scare and start drilling off shore and in ANWAR instead of worrying about future elections. An aggressive effort also needs to be taken to build nuclear reactors and coal fired plants with clean coal technologies. The technology exists to develop these resources without significant environmental impact. Doing so would help us take control of our destiny instead of being held hostage forever.

Science knows that the volcanic eruptions across the planet are spewing much more greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere than is being produced by people. I am also amazed that legislators are actually listening to studies about cattle belching.

I am just one small operator in the agricultural world, but the economics are the same for the large operators. No one will miss me when I go out of business this year, but a flood starts with a few drops of rain, and the flood is coming if something is not done soon! If this nation does not act soon, the U.S. will be at the mercy of other countries for food just as we are for oil and life as we know it will never be the same.

It is time that Congress gets off their posteriors and shows some leadership! Take definitive action and do it now, while we have a chance to salvage this situation!

Congress apparently has no effective influence over the ever increasing cost of oil or gasoline at the pump. As a Senior Companion, I am compelled to drive as far as necessary to visit the elderly clients. The Public Health Service attempts to reimburse us for fuel mileage driven at a reasonable rate to compensate us for the fuel used. We understand that the reimbursement rate is going to have to be reduced because of budgetary constraints. Well, if it is as impossible as it appears to be to control fuel costs, perhaps it would be possible to find the funds to increase the mileage rate to compensate those of us who have to provide service to our clients despite high fuel prices.

GEORGE.

As the wife of a farmer, the economy is strong in the sense of commodity prices, but yet they are at their weakest when it comes to our fuel prices. Several of our neighbors have had to sell their semis that they used to use to haul grain for themselves and others in the community, just to pay their fuel bills for those trucks. With the price of fuel as well, my husband is not able to take as much income off from the farm, because there is not much left. There are 3 families that depend upon the farm to support them.

On the home front, I have had to make the choice for a while now, whether to buy groceries, or put gas in our vehicles. I drive a minivan that averages 23-25 miles to the gal-

lon. At the current cost of gas right now, it costs me on average \$90 to fill it up. That is one week's worth of groceries at our house. There are four of us in the home, 2 adults and 2 children with another due in November. We have a limited income right now, because of the weather our growing season has been affected. So for the last few months, we have lived off of about \$1800 a month. We do not drive the newest vehicles, our newest vehicle is my 1998 minivan that we purchased in 2007 after our other vehicle was totaled in a car accident. My husband has his 1995 farm truck which is gas, and the family truck which is diesel. We are only paying on one of these vehicles. Sad to say, but the 1995 diesel truck is the one we are paying on, even though with the price of diesel, it sits in the driveway, unless we have to haul hay or cattle. We have our mortgage payment which is not outrageous, \$646 a month. With me expecting, my doctor's appointments are over an hour away, about 100 miles plus roundtrip once a month for right now. I am also the parts pickup person for our farming operation. In the last week, I have made 3 trips out of town for parts to different stores, because not all of them carried the same parts. My brother has been in and out of the hospital for cancer treatments to get rid of a tumor that is otherwise inoperable. I have had to help my mother out with his care as well, as he needs someone with him 24/7. Living in a rural community as I do, our grocery prices have been affected by fuel costs as well. I pay \$4 a gallon for milk, where elsewhere it is about \$3.00. Bread is about \$3.00 a loaf, whereas elsewhere I have purchased the same bread for \$1.59 a loaf. Cheese is currently a want and not a need at our house, with a 2 pound loaf of cheese costing \$10 where a year ago, it was \$6.99. Those are our main staples in our home, especially the milk with two young kids at home ages 4 and 5. We could apply for WIC, but then someone else has to foot the bill to feed our family, and I was not raised that way. There is no money leftover at the end of the month for savings for just in case circumstances, which is very unsettling for me and my husband.

The best thing that Congress can do is to allow more options for drilling in the U.S., and quit depending on the foreign oil. There are numerous opportunities in the United States, which would create jobs, instead of sending them across the border to Mexico, as well as force the price of oil down. The other thing too, is if Congress would put the control of prices back into the oil companies' hands, I feel they would do a much better job at forcing the prices lower. Our country is rich in abundance of oil, if Congress would allow it. Why do you think that in Saudi Arabia, and Iraq fuel prices have not affected their country! They have an over abundance of oil. We have more than them, but yet we aren't allowed to utilize it because of such ridiculous restrictions Congress has imposed on companies. Which is fueled by environmentalists who are still using more energy than the average American family (Al Gore and his followers). We would not be destroying anything by drilling in these locations, obviously if we weren't meant to have the oil that is there, the good Lord would not have put it there for our responsible use!

TANSY, Malad.

Because of the huge rise in gas prices it now costs me \$90 to fill up my gas tank not to mention my husband's van. We now have no money for emergencies or any extras because of the huge increase in the price of gas. It has hurt our income a lot more than we had anticipated. I would suggest having incentives for gas preservation and I appreciate everything you plan on doing to help keep the cost of gas prices down. You have my vote this year because you really care

What happens to the people of Idaho including finding ways to keep gas prices from continuing to rise.

Keep up the good work, Senator.

CARLA.

I appreciate you asking for thoughts on energy. I believe we need to embrace and pursue alternatives to oil. Honda today unveiled a hydrogen powered car. What does Detroit offer? Something that really galls me is that the U.S. gives billions to countries that hate us, why? I am not a fan of welfare, but every dollar going to the poor in this country is spent here, how much of the money given to foreign countries is spent here? I know it is not that simple. I appreciate your efforts for Idaho and the U.S.

JACK, Boise.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AIR FORCE JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL'S CORPS

• Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I wish to congratulate the men and women of the Air Force Judge Advocate General's Corps on the occasion of its 60th anniversary. On January 25, 1949, under the authority of the Air Force Military Justice Act, the Air Force issued General Order 7 creating the Air Force Judge Advocate General's Department, later changed to Judge Advocate General's Corps.

Since that time, the men and women of the Judge Advocate General's Corps have become the living embodiment of their guiding principles of wisdom, valor, and justice. They have provided countless commanders, policymakers, and clients with the benefit of invaluable professional, candid, and independent counsel. Further, they have done so while living the core values of the Air Force: integrity, service before self and excellence in all they do.

The hallmark of their service to this great country is a profound respect for, and adherence to, the rule of law. Their steadfast dedication to the rule of law allows the U.S. Air Force to conduct itself in the best traditions of America and retain the highest moral ground.

The men and women who currently serve in the Judge Advocate General's Corps, and those that came before them, can be exceptionally proud of their service and the contributions they have made to our national security. As a former active duty Judge Advocate and current reserve Judge Advocate, I am intensely proud of my association with the Judge Advocate General's Corps. I am pleased to acknowledge this great achievement and congratulate the Corps for their service to this Nation.●

HONORING SIVAD PRODUCTIONS, INC.

• Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, this week, our country celebrated two historic events. On Monday, we commemorated the life and accomplishments of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.,

on what would have been his 80th birthday. The following day, January 20, our Nation's first African-American President, Barack Obama, was inaugurated on the west front of the U.S. Capitol. During this special and remarkable week, I rise to celebrate an African-American owned small business in my home State of Maine that has consistently sought to make a difference in people's lives, and has succeeded every step of the way.

Sivad Productions, Inc., located in Portland, offers its clients a wide variety of general contracting services. From administrative services and video production, to real estate and information technology, Sivad provides customers with superior quality and years of knowledge and experience. In March of 2008, Sivad Productions was named a Small Business Administration certified 8(a) firm. The 8(a) program is a business development tool that assists small disadvantaged businesses to compete in the Federal marketplace by helping them gain a myriad of procurement opportunities.

One of the most innovative projects that Sivad Productions' president, Dudley Davis, has been a part of is the Youth News & Entertainment Television, or YNETV. YNETV produces youth programming, and involves young adults in the process of producing, directing, and creating the shows. In nearly a decade and a half, students of high school and college age have created over 600 television episodes seen on many of the Maine affiliate stations of major networks.

Of YNETV's television shows, its most popular is Youth in Politics. Area high school and college students from across Maine debate the pressing issues facing Maine and America by engaging in thoughtful and substantive discussions and hosting candidate forums. The show's goal is the civic education and wider political participation of Maine's young adults. YNETV frequently features an equal number of college Democrats and college Republicans to provide balance, and deals with issues as varied as the war in Iraq to academic freedom.

Mr. Davis has forged a reputation as someone who has contributed immensely to the betterment of the community in southern Maine. He has long been associated with the YES! Summer Basketball League and The Basketball Academy, which seek to provide young athletes with an outlet to participate in sports in a positive environment. Parents and students alike have praised Mr. Davis's "exceptional ability to inspire, motivate and teach," and commended his admirable contributions to Maine's children. Mr. Davis has also been honored by the Maine Commission for Community Service for his motivated and exceptional service to Maine youth programs.

President Obama has made a passionate and eloquent plea for increased community service on the part of all

Americans. It is a call that Dudley Davis heard long ago. Mr. Davis's determination to effectuate positive change for the youth of southern Maine is laudable, and his tremendous work has certainly not gone unnoticed. I thank Mr. Davis for his passion and dedication, and wish everyone at Sivad Productions, Inc., much success in the years to come.●

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:25 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Zapata, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 384. An act to reform the Troubled Assets Relief Program of the Secretary of the Treasury and ensure accountability under such Program.

At 3:10 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Zapata, one of its reading clerks, announced that pursuant to sections 5580 and 5581 of the revised statutes (20 U.S.C. 42-43), and the order of the House of January 6, 2009, the Speaker appoints the following Members of the House of Representatives to the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution: Mr. BECERRA of California, Ms. MATSUI of California, and Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas.

The message also announced that pursuant to 15 U.S.C. 1024(a), and the order of the House of January 6, 2009, the Speaker appoints the following Members of the House of Representatives to the Joint Economic Committee: Mrs. MALONEY of New York and Mr. BRADY of Texas.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 384. An act to reform the Troubled Assets Relief Program of the Secretary of the Treasury and ensure accountability under such Program; to the Committee on Finance.

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-527. A communication from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Revision of the Hawaiian and Territorial Fruits and Vegetables Regulations" (Docket No. APHIS-2007-0052) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 16, 2009; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-528. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the funding transfers made during fiscal year 2008; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-529. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting a report on the approved