

I am beginning to see it again, young people really getting interested in public service. If you have that heart for service, it is the exact opposite of what Time magazine chronicled on the cover of its magazine back in the late 1960s, the "me generation." It was concerned about me, me. Now we see so much interest in helping our communities as being more the "we generation." Now we see a lot more young Americans applying to the Peace Corps and its domestic counterpart, AmeriCorps, and so many other national service programs.

Our new President has issued a call for all Americans to devote at least 1 year of their lives to national service. If I had my druthers, I would want every young person to have an obligation to serve at least 1 year in some capacity to their country. This would have tremendous benefits down the road. They could choose the military, the Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, a teacher's aide—a host of these things in helping out our communities. Of course, we are not at a point, especially with the economic condition we are in, that we can afford that as a mandatory obligation. So what the new President has called for is for all Americans to devote at least 1 year of their lives to national service.

We come today to discuss legislation that is an acknowledgment across the political divide of our President's call to engage people in national service. This is going to be the first substantial investment in our Nation's service programs in nearly two decades. What this bill is going to do is triple the number of participants in our national service programs from 75,000 to 250,000. These volunteers are going to serve as tutors and mentors. They are going to do that for children. They will help build affordable housing. They will teach marketable computer skills. They will repair our parks and waterways. They will run afterschool programs and help respond to disasters in communities.

The legislation would create several new volunteer corps with specific missions in areas of national need such as education, health care, clean energy, and caring for veterans. We have commended over and over our colleagues, Senators KENNEDY and HATCH, in crafting legislation that will inspire and encourage citizens of all ages, not just the young, and all occupations and backgrounds to engage in national service.

Let me say where I see this example of public spiritedness. I see it in senior citizens, who have already had their professional lives, who are now enjoying the fruits of their labors, and they in turn want to respond and are very much as valuable in this national service as the young people.

This bill should be seen as an important national achievement and a good example of how we can come together and overcome the challenges that lie ahead.

Marian Wright Edelman, the first African-American woman admitted to the

State bar of Mississippi, said it is a time for greatness, not for greed. She said:

It's a time for idealism—not ideology. It is a time not just for compassionate words, but for compassionate action.

Heeding those words, Mr. President, it is time for us to take action and to pass this bill.

I yield the floor.

EMPLOYEE FREE CHOICE ACT

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, the Employee Free Choice Act is vital legislation for achieving fairness in the workplace for hardworking men and women across America, and for strengthening the Nation's middle class. I have the deepest respect for my colleague from Pennsylvania, Senator SPECTER, and I welcome his recognition of the need for labor law reform. But I am also disappointed that my friend feels he cannot support the bill in its current form.

I remain deeply committed to moving this important bill forward. Millions of Americans are looking to us to make their workplaces fairer and safer, and their jobs more secure. They deserve better than they have today, and we can't leave them behind.

The Senator from Pennsylvania says that we should not take up the Employee Free Choice Act now because of the challenges facing our economy. I disagree. It is precisely because of the economic crisis that we must take new action to strengthen workers' rights.

Working Americans are suffering in ways we have not seen since the Great Depression. Wages are falling and benefits are disappearing. Workers are losing their jobs, their homes, and their hopes. Now more than ever, workers deserve a voice in the hugely important decisions that will affect their jobs and their families in the years ahead.

Unions were fundamental in building America's middle class, and have a vital role today in preserving the American dream. History shows us that strong unions mean strong economic growth that both businesses and employees can share. Protecting the right to form a union today will help countless working families achieve greater economic security and build a better and brighter future. I hope very much that all of us on both sides of the aisle can work together to pass the best possible bill to put working families back on track.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, on March 12, 2009, I was attending the funeral of a very close friend and was unable to cast votes on rollcall vote No. 97 and rollcall No. 98. I ask that the RECORD reflect that had I been present I would have cast my vote as follows: rollcall vote No. 97, confirmation David W. Ogden, of Virginia, to be Deputy At-

torney General: NO; rollcall vote No. 98, confirmation Thomas John Perrelli, of Virginia, to be Associate Attorney General: NO.

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:

Several years ago, the President, in his State of the Union message, noted that our nation was "addicted to oil". Well, that is the first step of recovery, to admit you have a problem, but it is not recovery. My wife and I decided to do something about it. We built a smaller home (downsized from 3,300 to 1,600 sq feet) right on the Greenbelt in the Waterfront District of Garden City. That cut our commute down from about 7 miles, one way, to 3-4 and eliminated a 300 foot climb/descent. Before the move, we already owned small, fuel efficient vehicles and bike commuted about 50 percent of the time. Now we rarely drive and find we get places faster than by car and do not have to worry about parking. Both of our cars sit in the garage and we plan to sell one shortly.

Our monthly auto fuel bill has gone from about \$60 to almost nothing. Our home gas bill went from near \$100/mo to under \$30. Electric is down to \$30 from \$90. Water is down to \$30 from over \$200 in summer and it takes me about 10 minutes to mow my small lawn with a push mower.

The Greenbelt is my highway now, and I get in about 100 miles per week just peddling around town. I look forward to my commutes along the river where I dodge geese and squirrels instead of road warriors on the Connector. The exercise improves both my mental and physical health.

I still interact with cars when I head cross town and am amazed at the madness in the streets. It feels like drivers are in such a hurry, and it appears that Idaho's current public transportation policy seems to be "one multi-tasking in a hurry somewhat angry person per SUV".

Remaining addicted to oil can create a host of problems including:

Driving up the price of fuel for everyone (simple supply/demand equation)

Adding to our rapidly deteriorating air quality in the Treasure Valley

Creating the need for additional roads and parking (and more taxes)