

make sense for them to invest millions (probably billions) of dollars in the exploration and production of increased oil supplies so in order to sell us gasoline at \$2.50 a gallon? Spend money to reduce profits? If Ford were selling all the new F-150 pickups they could produce for \$30,000 each, would they spend billions to expand their assembly line so they could sell 25 percent more trucks for \$22,500 each? Of course not, they would keep the price at \$30,000 and enjoy the increased profits. And the oil companies will do the same thing. Increasing oil supplies will only give the big oil companies more oil to sell at \$120 a barrel and will not drive the price at the pump down one bit.

There's no competition in the oil industry, the regulating bodies have allowed too many mergers resulting in a few super-companies that are all in bed together. The only way you could make an idea like dramatically expanding domestic production work is if you started a completely new, independent company to find and extract the new oil, then build new refineries to turn it into a usable product, then build an entirely new distribution infrastructure to get the product to the consumers. That would cost trillions of dollars and it will never happen.

Gasoline costs \$4.00 a gallon because we are still buying it at \$4.00 a gallon. That is the simple truth. Our country's entire infrastructure depends on gas and diesel engines in cars, trucks, planes, and ships to get products and people from Point A to Point B. And I will be the first one to admit, I am not prepared to quit driving my car, so I am as much a part of the problem as anyone. But short of a federal cap on consumer gasoline and diesel fuel prices, competition and reduced demand are the only things that will drive down the price of retail gasoline. Until that happens, we are just hosed.

CARL BLOOMQUIST, *Nampa*.

First I would like to thank you for taking the time to listen to the people on this subject.

Our brief story: 6 months ago we had two cars and a truck. We could not afford to drive the truck any longer so we sold it and paid off one of our cars. That helped for a while but the gas prices kept creeping up. I work downtown and we are fortunate enough to live close to a bus route. Now I pay \$36.00 for a monthly Valley Ride pass and I ride the bus every day. That takes an additional hour of time a day but now we save close to \$100.00 a month in gas by doing that. But the gas prices are still climbing and might reach \$5.00 per gallon. Now we have two cars and one sits in the driveway. So now we are thinking seriously about selling the car that is paid off and paying down the loan on the other car. I am also thinking seriously of buying a bicycle and gearing up to commute on a bicycle to work. This will help me get in shape as well as help keep the environment clean.

So . . . In a matter of a few months we went from three vehicles down to (most likely) one vehicle and riding bicycles. We are sick and tired of the prices (fuel and food) continuing to creep up and refuse to put up with it anymore.

We want to make a trip to Bend Oregon to visit our grandchildren but we cannot afford to do that this month. We will have to save another \$100 and do that at the end of next month. We all work too hard to "try" and make ends meet to have to make decisions between gasoline and grandchildren.

So maybe someone will hear our story and something can be done about this.

Thank you again for listening.

MICHAEL VISCETTO.

I strongly disagree with your stand on the climate change bill that recently was de-

feated in filibuster action recently. I was very disappointed in your vote. These are measures that need to be made for our environment, and for our economy.

Trying to open federal wildlife reserves to more drilling is not the answer. There is not enough oil there to make a difference in the world price of oil and gas. (And I say this as someone who owns lots of stock in oil, gas, and oil service industry companies.) We instead need to focus on making alternative, non-CO₂ emitting fuels. I do agree with your support for nuclear energy, solar and wind power. With the coming development of electric powered vehicles, these will greatly decrease the use of gasoline, which is the best way to bring about a price drop—which will make a climate change bill that much more important.

MITCH LONG, *Boise*.

Not sure where to begin. It is very hard for us to live right now with both the cost of fuel rising, and the cost of food rising. My husband served this country for 22 years in the Military until he became injured, and was unable to do his duties anymore as a military man. He went back to school, thanks to the VA, and is now a board certified respiratory therapist. He is still looking for a job at this point and time. I have faith he will find one soon because we live payday to payday, and there are times when we do not have enough to pay the bills we have because I went to the store, or put gas in my car. So I also have to make a choice as to put gas in the car, or go to the grocery store. But you have to have gas in the car to get to the store. Living off of potatoes, and macaroni cheese is getting old. And every where you look there are commercials telling you to eat right. How can a person eat right when you can't afford the food in the first place? Plus with all of my doctor bills and the amount of medication I am on does not help either. I struggle everyday wondering what am I going to feed my family today, and I wonder what is really going to happen to us.

TAMMY.

Rather than a story I would like to offer a suggestion. My suggestion is that Congress should put in place requirements for oil companies to begin placing hydrogen fueling options at their stations nationwide. Consumers should be offered incentives for purchasing H cell cars. Oil needs to be used as a lubricant not a pollutant.

Thank you for your efforts.

CATHY JONES.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO CARTER INDUSTRIES, INCORPORATED

• Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to Carter Industries for their recent accomplishment.

Carter Industries was recently awarded the Defense Logistics Agency's, DLA, Business Alliance Award for Outstanding Readiness Support in the Historically Underutilized Business Zone Small Business Category. This agency provides logistics support for our military as well as other non-military agencies. Carter Industries plays a very important role in the DLA's ability to provide clothing to our men and women serving domestically and abroad. Specifically, they provide coveralls for flyers and combat

vehicle crewmen, which protect them from fire related injuries. Since 1996, they have manufactured military clothing in a timely fashion have consistently been dependable for our military. Located in Olive Hill, KY, in the eastern part of my State, Carter Industries also provides valuable jobs for Kentuckians in their efforts to support our men and women in uniform.

I now ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Carter Industries for their recent achievement and commitment to our military. They deserve proper recognition for their service to our great Nation.●

TRIBUTE TO DR. ROBERT J. SMITHDAS

• Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to an inspirational New Yorker, Dr. Robert J. Smithdas, on the occasion of his retirement as Director of Community Education at the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults, HKNC, in Sands Point, LI.

At the age of four, Dr. Robert J. Smithdas contracted meningitis, which resulted in the total loss of his vision and, over a short period of time, the total loss of his hearing. After graduating Perkins School for the Blind in Watertown, MA, in 1945, he was accepted for training at the Industrial Home for the Blind, IHB, located in Brooklyn, NY, and received a fellowship to attend St. John's University in New York. He received his BA degree cum laude in 1950, and 3 years later became the first person who is deaf-blind to earn a master's degree, receiving this distinction at New York University where he specialized in vocational guidance and rehabilitation for people with disabilities. Dr. Smithdas is also the recipient of four honorary Doctoral degrees from: Gallaudet University, Western Michigan University, Mount Aloysius College and, his alma mater, St. John's.

Dr. Smithdas continued his work with important and significant contributions in the field of rehabilitation, having successively occupied important management positions at the IHB, including that of associate director of services for the deaf-blind in charge of overall client services.

Along with Helen Keller and Peter Salmon, Dr. Smithdas played a vital role in the development of legislation enacted as part of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act. The act authorized the establishment of the Helen Keller National Center, which is operated by Helen Keller Services for the Blind under an agreement with the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services.

A true "Renaissance man," Dr. Smithdas' numerous national awards include being named the Poetry Society of America's "Poet of the Year," 1960-61, "The Handicapped American of the Year," 1965, by the President's