

years. Indeed, he practiced water and environmental law. Our colleague's affection for the pristine, majestic beauty of the Silver State and its people is embedded in his DNA.

Senator SALAZAR also made a mark instantly on this institution. In 4 years, he developed a reputation for bringing people together in common purpose—whether it was advancing renewable energy policy, confirming judges, standing up to abuses at the Justice Department, or championing the State Children's Health Insurance Program.

And I would add that as we work to expand that latter program today, his leadership will be missed.

His time in this institution was short, but he has made those moments count. As Senator SALAZAR seeks to find a balance between renewables and fossil fuels in the administration's energy choices, protect our public lands, and restore integrity to what has been a deeply troubled Department, I am confident that as Interior Secretary he will bring the same temperament to the job that he has brought to his responsibilities in the Senate, never forgetting those who came before us—whose sweat and heart remain at the very foundation of this great country of ours.

And so, today, we thank Senator SALAZAR for his service and wish him well. As he has throughout his life, I have no doubt he will do a remarkable job for our Nation.

TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL CHERTOFF

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I rise to express my deep gratitude to Secretary Michael Chertoff for the service he has given his country over the past 4 years as head of the Department of Homeland Security.

Secretary Chertoff came to the job in February 2005, upon the retirement of the Department's first leader, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge, with an impressive record of public service as a Federal judge, an assistant attorney general, and a prosecutor. He leaves office in the next few days with even greater distinction for shepherding the Department through the growing pains of, shall we say, its toddler years, making great strides to turn the amalgam of 22 agencies—all with different cultures and missions—and 200,000 employees into a single, focused Department. His commitment to the security of the American people remains unswerving, for which he deserves the Nation's appreciation.

Leading the Department of Homeland Security is one of Washington's toughest jobs and probably one of the most thankless. The Department of Homeland Security carries with it the awesome responsibility for safeguarding the Nation against terrorist attacks and natural disasters. It incorporates many different agencies, with missions critical to the American people, ranging from emergency management; to

immigration and border security; to air, rail, and highway travel security; cybersecurity; science and technology; biological and chemical security; and infrastructure protection. Unfortunately, the Secretary gets no credit for terrorist attacks that have been averted and, of course, would be blamed if an attack were to occur. Let me say that I believe our country is safer than it was when Secretary Chertoff began his tenure at the Department, and it is in part due to his attentive and forceful leadership—and the dedicated service of the men and women he had led—that the country has been spared from another terrorist attack. His contribution toward efforts to disrupt the plot to destroy airplanes en route from Great Britain to the United States in August 2006 is especially noteworthy.

Secretary Chertoff brought a rigorous, clear-eyed intensity to the Department's many challenges. He has worked hard to set priorities for the Department and lay out a roadmap to achieve goals. While we in Congress have not agreed with all of his decisions, he has spoken clearly about his goals and been honest with us and the American people about the difficult tradeoffs involved in many aspects of homeland security.

Obviously, the Department is still a work in progress with many challenges ahead. But the Secretary has made an indelible mark in a number of areas. I will mention just a few that are of deep importance to me. First, I would note that it has been under Secretary Chertoff that the serious work of protecting the government's information technology infrastructure began. Our enemies and economic competitors are highly skilled at using computer systems to try to gain advantage over us. Secretary Chertoff realized this, took the threat seriously, and moved to secure government networks in a coordinated, comprehensive way through the creation of the comprehensive national cybersecurity initiative, CNCI. CNCI is still in its nascent stages and many other agencies have responsibility for its success, but I am pleased the Secretary moved with resolve to improve our defenses against cyberintruders.

Under Secretary Chertoff's leadership, DHS has made important strides in improving its financial management. DHS has taken important steps toward improving its grades from OMB on information security, and, I am told OMB's latest data will show that the morale of the Department's employees has definitely improved.

To his credit, Secretary Chertoff learned from his Department's mistakes responding to Hurricane Katrina and set to work to recreate FEMA, and enable it to leverage DHS' many other significant resources, so that it can become, for the first time in its history, an emergency management agency capable of responding to a catastrophic disaster.

The fact is that today, FEMA is not the same agency it was in 2005. That's

because the Secretary has been an instrumental ally in implementing legislation I was honored to draft with my colleague on the committee, Senator COLLINS, to transform FEMA into a stronger, more accountable, and more coordinated agency. It is now elevated to a special status within DHS—like the Coast Guard—so that its authorities and assets cannot be changed without congressional approval and its administrator is the President's principle adviser in an emergency. Key FEMA officials now are required to have relevant emergency management experience; its preparedness duties are united with its response functions so that the same people who prepare for emergencies also respond to them. FEMA now has responsibility for dispensing \$2 billion in homeland security grants and its 10 regional offices are getting stronger by the day. To the Secretary, I would say that the Department's much improved internal coordination and coordination with State and local officials during the 2008 hurricane season attests to the improvements that have been made.

There are many other areas in which Secretary Chertoff's leadership has been instrumental, including border and port security, chemical security, information-sharing, and developing the architecture to protect the nation of terrorist attacks using weapons of mass destruction. And, of course, all Americans who travel by air have been made safer by the Secretary's focus on improving the Transportation Security Administration.

I cannot talk about all of the Secretary's accomplishments today. But I would be negligent if I did not thank him for his assistance in achieving a goal that has a very low national profile, but which has significant ramifications for the 200,000 employees at the Department. I am talking about efforts to consolidate most of the Department's headquarters under one roof at St. Elizabeths Hospital campus in southeast Washington. The Department's headquarters is spread throughout more than 70 buildings across the Washington area, making communication, coordination, and cooperation between its component parts a real challenge. A unified headquarters would allow employees to work more efficiently and interactively and is a critical cornerstone of the efforts to improve management and integration at the Department. I am pleased the National Capital Planning Commission recently approved a master plan for a consolidated headquarters at St. Es. I expect construction to begin later this year, and I thank Secretary Chertoff for his leadership in this effort.

In the short time since it was created in 2002, the Department of Homeland Security has become an equal among the most important government agencies responsible for our national security, such as the Department of Defense. Secretary Ridge launched the process and admirably led the Department through the initial challenge of

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