

before us, they misinterpret congressional intent. In those situations, particularly when important issues like money laundering are involved, it is incumbent upon Congress to take corrective action. I hope that my colleagues will join me in supporting this legislation.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, this year's Black History Month comes at a remarkable time that will be marked in the history books for generations to come. The inauguration of our Nation's first African-American President, Barack Obama, and confirmation of the first African-American Attorney General, Eric Holder, demonstrate our Nation's boundless capacity to change. All Americans have great cause to celebrate during this year's Black History Month our groundbreaking progress.

As Civil rights icon Representative John Lewis observed, "When he [President Obama] was born, people of color couldn't register to vote in many quarters of the deep South." Now, an African-American holds the most distinguished elected position in our country—President of the United States of America. This month is a time to reflect on the distance we have traveled, and the civil rights we have successfully fought for, in just one generation.

But it is also not a time to become complacent. Americans still encounter injustices solely because of their background or the color of their skin. There still exist large and unacceptable disparities in the opportunities afforded many Americans for good education, health care, employment, and more. Black History Month provides an opportunity for Congress to remember that addressing these injustices and disparities must be an important goal for Congress in the years ahead.

So this month let us reflect on our past triumphs, take note of this significant historical moment for our Nation, and look forward to an even brighter future as we continue working to ensure equality for all Americans.

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:

In response to your request for personal experience with the rising energy costs, I write not to whine, but to share concern. I live in Caldwell and work in Boise, near the airport, which quickly adds up to well over 400 driving miles a week just in commuting and equates to one full tank of gas, if I am lucky. I have done the research: public transportation is not an option from Caldwell or Nampa into Boise to our off-the-beaten-path work location. I work in non-profit, assisting others in worse situations than myself, which does keep rising energy costs "in perspective," however, concern is fast approaching.

Because I work in non-profit, I cannot afford to live any nearer to work, though. I really do not make that little of money—13.46/hr., which is, of course, much higher than the minimum wage. The problem for me is realizing how much is going out in taxes. My paycheck for 80 hours is \$1,077, which is quite doable for a single resident, but my gross wage is \$796. That is \$562 every month; a lot of money that could either go toward the rising food, utility or gas costs or allow me to live closer to where I work.

People looking to the government for more handouts will only continue to cripple the system. There are so many agencies with waiting, open arms to assist people in need of finding work or housing—like my agency. Cut taxes—help the working, taxpaying citizens stay on their feet and out of homeless shelters and local food pantries.

JEN, Boise.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my concerns regarding the impacts of higher fuel and energy costs on me. As fuel prices have risen, I have had to start thinking about where I need to go and what my routine will be for the day before getting in the truck. Gone are the days when I would drive 15 miles to the next town to have lunch with someone. Nowadays, I have started riding my bike to work, bought a motorcycle, and even took a different job closer to my house; all in an effort to reduce my fuel expenses. The motorcycle even gets 5x the MPG that my truck does. As a result of all of this, I now drive my truck less than 10K miles per year and have lost 15 lbs just this spring/summer alone. I go to bed earlier, watch less TV, wake up earlier, and generally am happier and have more energy due to the added exercise that I am getting.

I feel horrible for not driving my truck everywhere, but I just cannot afford it. I do hope that that does not make me any less patriotic. I applaud your efforts at trying to get Congress to understand that the only way back to cheap gas (at least for 10 years or so) is to start drilling and pumping crude in Alaska, Utah, Colorado, Montana, Idaho, and any other state that might have some oil under the earth. We need to get every last drop of oil we can from under our own country. We should leave no patch of earth untapped. We must get it all. We need it. It is the only way to protect my right to \$1.20/gallon gasoline prices and continue my God-given way of life here in America.

Thanks again for doing a great job.

GREG.

Thank you so much for taking an interest in our energy problems. My husband and I

spend \$700-\$800 per month in fuel cost. In addition to that our home is heated by heating oil. This winter our oil bill was about \$250 per month. If prices keep rising our heating costs this winter may soar to \$350 per month. My husband and I are doing our best to commute when possible. However, our work schedule only allows for this twice a week. I have a son with medical problems that make it difficult for me to take the commuting van as I may have to get home at odd times for him.

I am not educated enough on our fuel issues. However, I feel that there must be answers and solutions. The fuel is affecting the costs of everything. We are headed for a recession unless something is done quickly. I believe that drilling for oil within our own nation is a must. That will not solve our immediate problems, but we need to be looking long term, too. I think that the oil companies need to be held to a level of profits when it comes to increasing prices. I also feel that the Treasure Valley must have some sort of public transportation system. This needs to be started soon. Not only will this help with our energy costs, but also with air quality. That would be a system I could use as I would be able to access it any time. I realize that a lot of these solutions require large amounts of money, but the federal government needs to step in.

Thank you, again, for taking time for public comments. I appreciate all you do for the citizens of Idaho.

WENDY.

"Gas prices are too high" is a response not worthy of your staff's time and energy. We already know that. The question I have is, "why"? I think several things are going on here.

First, speculation/profit taking. People are trying to make exorbitant profits at the expense of not just Americans, but everyone whose fuel ticket is written by the cartels. The oil companies are making record profits on top of record profits. Where is the re-investment in refining capability, exploration, and improved distribution? Americans are feeling like these companies are thumbing their collective corporate noses at us, the customer. All the while, prices on everything affected by the cost of a barrel of oil keep increasing.

Second, we are a society built on cheap energy. That is clear. It is unreasonable to expect that to continue indefinitely. At the same time the process of weaning us away from these cartels' stranglehold is forced upon us. I think that we are placing our very existence as Americans into someone else's control.

We need to do what we can here to mitigate this immediate and forced situation. We can become energy independent, but that is going to take time. In the meantime, we need to explore other avenues to keep us an independent nation, and get us out from under the foot of countries whose only concern for America is that we keep buying their oil so that they can remain rich and expand their interests. Some of these countries are, at the core, anti-American.

How did we get here? Greed. Across the board! Let us not let the lobbies dictate what they think is best for this nation, unless it is. And our governmental branches need to get a handle on this, or this brink of crisis position we find ourselves in is going to result in some very difficult times for a long, long, time. For some families, it already is dire right now. I would also like to say that predicating our future actions on the basis of some "environmental catastrophe" where there is not good science to back it up, is, at the very least, foolhardy. Again, too few people are making bad policy for this nation,