

Like its occupants and visitors over the past century, the building has adapted itself for the 21st century. The Russell Senate Office Building on its 100th birthday is a working building, alive with Senators and staff doing the business of our Nation, well equipped and ready to face the challenges of the future.

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:

Thank you for soliciting our opinions regarding the energy crisis. I truly value this opportunity to communicate my concerns to you.

Gas prices have certainly been on the rise and like most Idahoans, I have been affected by this increase. I also remember the words of President Bush when he stated that we as a nation are "addicted" to oil. I am a psychologist and I know that when an addict is feeling the pain of their addiction (as we are with gas prices), it is not helpful to find them a cheaper way to get a drink.

What I am saying by that analogy is that I do not think increasing exploration for oil in Alaska or off the coast of Florida will help us in the long term. Fossil fuels are a limited resource and we'll feel the pain of those limitations sooner or later. I do not support further exploration to temporarily fix this problem. I do support the idea that we invest heavily in renewable, environmentally sustainable, energies.

For example, rather than giving huge tax breaks to oil companies to promote more gas production, let us give those tax cuts to the car manufacturers to produce cars that run on less gas or better yet, run on non-fossil based fuels. American companies are way too far behind Japanese companies in this effort and to remain competitive, I think we'll have to invest in the technologies of the future rather than scraping the bottom of the barrel for what oil remains.

Thank you.

RICK, Pocatello.

Why are we saving the oil in the United States? The oil fields in the lower 48 could alone make us self-sufficient; that is without

the biggest oil field in the world which is in Alaska. Why are we being so dependent on foreign oil when there is no need to be? Our economy is going the wrong way and can be fixed by getting the price of gas back down where it should be. My wife and I are retired and live in the country outside of Midvale, Idaho. It is a long ways to the grocery store and department stores. I hope you can get something started in the Senate that will open some eyes. Most of the members of the Congress and Senate are financially set so the price of gas does not affect them. However, they have a lot of constituents that are hurting. Thanks for your time.

God Bless America.

BRENT and PEGGY, Midvale.

I have a very sincere feeling that the Congress has been waffling on the oil and gasoline price rise. It is my hope that they will soon begin to realize they are hurting the complete economy. We are all hurting because of the higher gasoline price but it trickles down to everything we buy. It burns me up to hear people complain about President Bush and how he has started the whole thing. Just yesterday he explained to the public that the Congress has not given him a bill to sign.

I certainly wish Congress could stick its neck out and demand that all new electricity generation plants be nuclear plants. We are wasting our natural gas on firing electricity generation and coal is causing emissions which I believe are not good for the world. Nuclear plants are so efficient and I wish we had not allowed France and Germany to outdo us with the technology to make safe atomic plants.

Next, I would wish that Congress would mandate a term of time that would allow us to get weaned from oil and give us a good alternative engine for automobiles, for example. We are a wide ranging country and traveling from one area to another is necessary. We do not have anything but busses to move us in most areas. I do not like the fact that corn is getting so high priced because of the ethanol push. I know that I cannot use ethanol because it will ruin all the components in my autos I presently own. I do not think enough thought has gone into ethanol use and I feel it is going to ruin our food product prices. I have been associated with agriculture all my life and I cannot believe the prices some of these crops were bringing last year.

Right now we need to be drilling off shore and ANWR for oil. I believe an oil company or two needs to build a new refinery or two to help out in the meantime. I think the oil companies have held us hostage all my life and they still are!

God Bless you and your good work.

GORDON, Twin Falls.

Thank you for the opportunity to let you know how energy prices are affecting me. I was forwarded your email from a friend who is on your mailing list.

I am a 56-year-old widow. My husband has been gone for 6 years. We lived a middle-class lifestyle, but now that he is gone, I am struggling to make ends meet and be able to remain in the home that my husband built for our family. Even though all my children are gone from home, I still have one child in college that I need to help. I live 7 miles west of Rigby, and 10 miles north of Idaho Falls, so I have to do a lot of driving just to get anywhere. I have drastically reduced my driving, and I still pay way more than I used to for gas.

One of the biggest areas I have been affected is with my heating costs. Natural gas is not available where my home is, so 10 years ago we put in a propane furnace,

thinking it would be fairly inexpensive to operate. At the time propane was 65 cents a gallon. Last fall I filled my tank for \$1.69 a gallon. When I went to refill it in February, the price had jumped to \$2.40 a gallon in just a few months. I cannot afford that price to heat my home. I decided to turn my heat down to 62 degrees on my thermostat, and just wear a sweater. If I want to work in one room I run a small electric heater to stay warm. I never thought I would have to be cold in my own house because I cannot afford to run my furnace.

I think it is time to drastically increase our own production of oil. We need to drill in Alaska, and wherever else it is feasible. Is the environment more important than people's well being? I do not think so. It is time we told the environmentalists to be quiet. I think the oil companies need to be putting their huge profits into finding more sources of oil. And let us get busy and find alternatives to oil. It is about time.

Thanks for letting me express my views.

PHYLLIS, Rigby.

First of all, I am glad to see that your head is screwed on correctly. I am sick and tired of our Congress saying that oil companies must pay "wind-fall profit" taxes. As if this will fix the problem. Why are so many of our lawmakers ignorant of how economy really works? Why is supply and demand so hard to grasp for some?

Now, how is the current price of gas hitting me and my family. Rather hard, I must say. Now, I grew up in a rural area and, for that reason, I live outside of Boise. I do not care for crowds and I like to have space (though, honestly, where I live still does not have enough space). For this reason, I spend a good deal on gas. This is not the fault of the government, nor am I looking for the government to solve my problems. (They have not solved any yet, and now they're talking about universal health care, HA! do not make laugh. But I digress.)

In an effort to curb the fuel pain, last year I purchased a gas-sipping 4-banger that gets 45 mpg (I bought that when I anticipated gas @ \$3/gal.). However, my wife and I have a large family and a large vehicle is a must. We have a Suburban to carry our family of 7 (including my wife and I). A large vehicle is simply a must, and given where we live, a vehicle with 4wd capability is a must too. This Suburban gets 17 mpg, and with a 42 gallon tank, it is getting rather painful to fill this beast. Assuming an empty tank, it would take \$168 to fill that behemoth, but I need it and we keep the driving on that to a minimum.

Some of our circumstances are due to where we live and we chose to live there. I do not seek empathy for this. However, compassion for our people would be good. Congress could make significant strides forward if they would stop catering to special interest groups and drill in our oil reserves. There is no reason not to. Drilling in ANWR is not going to make extinct the animals that live there.

Also, there is no reason we cannot make more refineries. We cannot refine the oil we import fast enough, to say nothing about the oil that we could be drilling from our own soil and water. We should make more nuclear power, or cut our thirst for energy. It is one or the other, and since we are not cutting energy, we have got to produce more.

ANDY.

I am the Service Coordinator at Community Action Partnership in Clearwater County. We are the agency that distributes the Energy Assistance Funds (LIHEAP) for North Central Idaho. I must tell you that I am extremely concerned about our low income people this coming winter, especially

the ones on fixed incomes, such as the elderly. If congress does not increase the benefit amount of LIHEAP considerably, I am seriously afraid that some people will literally freeze to death.

Of the 500 or so LIHEAP applications I do, about 300 of them are elderly (60+). Of that 300, probably more than half heat with oil or propane. Many of them were talked into converting to an oil stove (such as TOYO) several years ago, because they were considered very energy efficient, however no one could have predicted that the price of oil would quadruple in a few years time. To make matters worse, many oil and propane company's require a minimum delivery of 100 gallons, that is over \$400, and in many cases that could be half or more of their monthly income!

I intend to work with Clearwater County Social Services, and our local churches to see what can be done at the local level. I am hoping to be raise funds to purchase the most efficient electric heaters I can find to give out to our most vulnerable citizens. It certainly does not solve the overall energy problem facing this country, but at least it might keep a few people from freezing this winter.

Thank you for your interest and concern in this matter, and good luck!

BARBARA.

The American public is lazy! We should be holding all our elected officials responsible for OPEC and Big Oil's price gouging of the country through its outrageous fuel prices. We all should be continuously writing, emailing, and faxing our city councilpersons, county supervisors, state legislators, congressmen, and presidential candidates to make them support a comprehensive, alternative energy program.

It is OPEC and the Big Oil companies that are preventing the development of ethanol. And they will continue to not allow the development of ethanol unless they can monopolize that, too. It is common knowledge that they contribute thousands of dollars to congressmen so that our elected officials will drag their feet and not push through a comprehensive plan.

Brazil became energy self-sufficient within five years by converting sugar cane into ethanol. Sweden is also developing plants to turn grass and hay into ethanol. There should be laws enacted here, too, requiring every gas station to offer at least one pump for ethanol. The construction of ethanol plants should be subsidized by the government, and job tax credits should be given to those plants for hiring new workers. Our country should be ambitiously working to wean itself off gasoline so we can tell OPEC where to stick its oil.

Auto manufacturers should be mandated to sell an increasing percentage of flex fuel cars each year. Of course, it will not do you any good to buy a flex fuel car if you cannot find a station in your town that sells ethanol (I am told that there is only one station in all of San Diego that sells ethanol). And, forget it if you are traveling anywhere out of town!

You would think that with the internet, everyone would come together, pool their ideas and resources, and actually get something done. Instead, we just sit back and take whatever is dished out to us. The American public has clout it does not even realize! If this nation's work force banded together and refused to go to work until the price of gasoline went down, you can bet we would bring this country to its knees in a week or less! I am tired of working for nothing! I am tired of seeing my children not be able to make ends meet.

When the working public goes bankrupt from channeling its hard-earned money into

fuel, we will be ripe for another country to come in and take us over.

Legislate ambitiously for off-shore drilling! Stop the export of oil from Alaska. Enough is enough! Do something about it!

JOSIE, Nampa.

I do not have much of a different story than many other Idahoans. I work hard each day 11 to 12 hrs. I live in a rural area of Canyon County so ride sharing or car pooling is not a viable option for me. I have to drive 18 miles to work so riding a bike is not an option especially after putting in a 12 hr day. I drive a small pick up Chevy S-10 to help reduce my gas usage (as I mow lawns and do small pruning jobs on the weekends to make a few extra dollars), my wife in I traded in our ford tarsus for a KIA Spectra last November to help save money and protect our budget of the current (Nov 07) high gas prices.

What I can say is that the only way out of our current situation is for our congress needs to show OPEC, that we are willing to take back control of our oil dependence.

1. Congress must do something positive about drilling oil in the U.S., no arguing, no debating, no pork added to the bills, just action.

2. We need to open up oil drilling anywhere that will have minimal environmental impact, there is no place to drill that will have no environmental impact, but we have the technology to reduce any impact to the environment that will not cause permanent damage. It is off the east coast, west coast, Gulf of Mexico or Alaska we need to start drilling.

3. We need to build refineries through the country, but especially on the west coast. The west coast refineries need to be able to process the high sulfur oil from Alaska. These actions should put a halt to the escalating oil prices from OPEC, but they are only the first steps.

4. Big Oil Tax breaks for exploration and research, I do not believe that these tax cuts are ever going to go away, but I heard a news report over the weekend the Exxon Mobil was exploring off the coast of the Philippines. This is totally insane they are spending our money in tax cuts outside the U.S.? If we are going to allow large profits and tax breaks for exploration and research then they can do in the U.S.

5. One of the biggest projects big oil could be spending our money on is research for liquefying oil shale to minimize any environmental effects of this process, but again there is no way not to have some impact on the environment, but as a country we must give a little to survive in this world situation.

6. To reduce using our oil, coal and natural gas reserves to generate electricity, we need to build Nuclear Power Plants where the need is and where it will cause minimal impact on the environment.

7. Long term measures would be to develop wind, water and solar and other alternative power satrapies, it is too late right now to impact the strategies hold OPEC has on our country, and in the long term these straggles could play an important role in our overall energy policy.

8. Please relay to your fellow Congressmen that if #1 and #2 are not acted on immediately there will be a lot on incumbents who will lose their seats in November. As the American public and trucking industry can afford the daily gas price increases. If the trucking industry falters then our whole economy will collapse. This is not a idle threat by one voter but a culmination of our elected officials doing nothing about our energy policy for the last 30 years, and within the last 6 years ignoring all the signs that

OPEC now has us by the neck in a strangle hold. The big oil companies really do not care as they make money either way.

ROBERT.

Thanks for the opportunity to respond to your newsletter on energy costs. My view, as expressed even before 9/11, was that we were subconsciously willing to sacrifice our children due to our selfishness, NIMBY mentality, and uncompromising positions regarding siting of energy facilities and development of energy resources. Our inability to develop a unified, effective energy policy is reflected in our addiction to oil, and just like a drug addict, we are selling out our country to those who least care about the future and security of our children. Like street drugs, the demand driven by our oil addiction is pushing up the price that further enhances the wealth of many rouge nations that support terrorism against us and would like nothing more than to see our demise. I attribute the deaths of our beloved service members on the battlefields in the Middle East to this issue. The cost to me in terms of high gas prices lowering my standard of living is nothing compared to the sacrifice of their lives caused by our ineptness to come together as a nation with a program for energy independence with an urgency akin to President Kennedy's national commitment to put a man on the moon in a decade. Anything short of that is treating a symptom and not the disease.

There are no quick fixes. It took several decades of selfishness to get us into this predicament, and it will take at least a decade of committed effort to fix it. We, as a nation, have the intellect and the resources to achieve energy independence if we unleash our federal and private institutions from excessive regulation. Decisions of such national importance must be based on sound technical and economic evaluation, not on how we can siphon more tax dollars to benefit our constituents and enrich our political standing or how we can enhance our personal wealth. The future of our nation and our children is in our hands.

NOEL, Idaho Falls.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO MILLARD FULLER

● Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to Millard Fuller, a great American entrepreneur who dedicated his life to sheltering the poor. Millard passed away on February 3, 2009. He leaves behind a great legacy of leadership and of service to the world's most vulnerable residents.

Millard was born in 1935 in Lanett, AL. It was in this town that Millard, at only 6 years old, earned his first profit by selling pigs and chickens. His entrepreneurial spirit would certainly carry him far. After some time working as a door-to-door salesman selling silk hosiery and underwear, Millard attended Auburn University to study economics. Following his graduation, Millard attended my alma mater, the University of Alabama School of Law, and it was there that he married his wife Linda.

While a law student at the University of Alabama, Millard expanded his entrepreneurial horizons and began selling Christmas trees and mistletoe with