

gas pump so often does not make one happy. I cannot believe the lack of common sense our government officials have concerning most issues but right now but this is the issue affecting my family the most.

We try to live our lives in a way that is self-sufficient, trying to lower our debt, trying to not buy on credit, growing a big garden, canning food, storing water and a supply of food for the family and living within our means. We live in a 67-year-old farmhouse because that was all we could afford. It is beat up and needs to be torn down but this is our home so this is the way we live. My husband does not make a lot of money. I only can work in the evenings when he is home for the children because we do not want someone else raising our children who do not care for them in the least. I stopped working full-time five years ago to stay home full-time with the children. We lost our health benefits then and have been without since then. With a daughter who has pretty serious asthma and allergies with her medications every month costing about \$300 to me needing a \$40,000 surgery to reconstruct my knee so the intense pain I live with everyday recedes, any jump in our tight budget puts a strain on us.

Where do the extra fuel costs come from in my budget? It comes out of the money we buy food with. I cut down on fresh fruits and vegetables. I cut down on cuts of meat. I cut down on dairy products. We live very meagerly. Not in the world's standards mind you, I have lived in a third world country for about 14 months. I know what poor is. The standards we are talking about are our American society.

Our government does not live within its means; it spends to oblivion. They borrow money like it is monopoly money. They are in our lives too much and should not be. Then the answer they come up with for becoming self-reliant with our oil demands and our energy consumption is: "cut down on your driving, buy a more fuel efficient car. Do not build any more refineries, do not drill our own oil, do not build nuclear, do not convert coal to oil, do not convert shale to oil and for sure do not drill in ANWR or off our own coasts. Let us lease 100-year leases to China and India and let them take our oil. They will do it right for sure. They are so honest with us and keep us in their minds to try to help us for sure." What is wrong with all of our government officials?

My family lived in Anchorage, Alaska, for the previous eight years before moving to Nampa. We have been debating this ANWR thing since before I can remember. What will it take to knock some common sense into these elected officials? I am tired of them acting like they know what is best for us. I am tired of the environmentalists ruling the world. I am tired of these elected officials playing politics when I am suffering with my family in what I can buy for their dinner.

Do they worry about not having the right amount of vegetables and fruits for their children so they can grow and be well? No, they do not. I do. And then they vote on issues that like carbon taxes and credits. What the heck is that all about? I am so tired of this. If I could have them in a room for five minutes, I would let them know how I feel. Get your stinking head out of Washington, DC and listen to the people who elected you. Stop taking American's independence and trampling it under your feet. I am more angry than you know.

Build refineries, build coal plants, drill for oil wherever we can. Get the Chinese and India off our coasts and let us drill. Build nuclear power plants, get the coal and shale and convert it. Stop importing oil from terrorists that control our economy when they want to. Let the Americans be great again.

Stop listening to the environmentalists and listen to us. My family suffers because you cannot do the right thing. Beware of continuing in your ways. Some of us have you in our sights and can vote differently. I cannot take this stupidity much longer. I wish you would all just stop fighting, go to your rooms on time out and then think about what you are doing wrong. That is the mother in me. Do the right thing. There, I think that is it for now.

JODI and AARON, *Nampa*.

We are writing in response to your letter asking for Idahoans to tell their story about how high fuel prices are affecting them. First I want to say that my family has been expecting this for some time now. We have known that cheap oil is a dream funded by government subsidies working with the big oil companies.

Oil is not an infinite resource. The U.S. peaked in oil production in the 70s and we believe that the world supply has peaked already and we are now facing the fact that supply cannot keep up with demand. We have actually four things which are coming to a head at this moment in time;

1. Peak Oil
2. Peak Food
3. Climate Change
4. Economic downturn/recession

Number 2 through 4 are all due to number 1—peak oil. The world is also experiencing a population problem which has come about from cheap oil resulting in cheap food. It seems like many are in denial about what is happening—and the longer we are in denial, the harder things are going to be.

We have bought a car which gets 45–50 mpg. We are conscious of when we drive, combining our errands etc. We are growing much of our own food and are sourcing and eating local food as much as possible. We are very involved with the "Local" movement as we believe that this is the one thing that is going to save us from a meltdown. We want small government as we do not believe that BIG government is in the people's best interest. The only thing that really seems to matter with BIG government is the bottom line of the corporations and the lobbyists.

People want change. They want better leadership and leaders with common sense. If we all have to forgo our SUV's and the "old American lifestyle" then so be it. We do not see much choice in the matter. We all need to conserve energy and create ways to have renewable energy. This planet cannot handle growth unchecked—which has been the premise up til now. It is going to be painful, but in the long run it is going to be better.

JAMES and LESLEE, *Buhl*.

We think we are lucky to be living in Idaho, as the people who live here are resourceful and strong.

JAMES.

The high gas prices are killing me when I buy gas. I own a rather old American car. It is a 1998 Pontiac Grand Am with a 3.1 liter V6. It is well cared for and gets pretty good gas mileage. 27 mpg around town and 30 mpg on the interstate. With 167,000 miles on the odometer I want to buy a new car but with gas prices around \$4 a gallon I hesitate. I want to buy an American car that can use ethanol. General Motors is in the news joining with the Ethanol maker from the 60 Minutes TV show to make Ethanol at \$1.00 a gallon from old tires, wood chips and garbage. I went to GM dealers and none make or sell flex fuel cars that can be bought in Brazil. My car runs good because I care for it so I guess I will need to wait a few more years to buy myself a new flex fuel car that can run on either gasoline or ethanol.

I try everything to save gas. My tires are well-inflated and the engine is tuned. I use a Chase Bank credit card that pays me 5% back on gasoline purchases. But the price of gas is still killing me.

In the short term, I believe that we in the U.S. need to pass laws to permit drilling for oil off the coast and also process oil shale into gasoline. We need to do something now or our country will come to a sudden stop.

DAN.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO DEBRA CLOW

• Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I wish today to recognize the work and career of Debra K. Clow of Sioux Falls, SD. Later this month, Debra will be retiring after nearly 37 years of Federal service in the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Debra grew up in Yankton, SD. She attended the University of South Dakota at Springfield and started her career with the ROTC at USD in August 1972. She began her career with the VA as a fee base clerk in January 1974 and over the years worked impressively in various capacities, including development clerk, claims examiner, authorizer, training and quality coordinator, and coach. In recent years, she also advised and updated South Dakota congressional staffs with the detailed status of cases involving numerous veterans.

While working at the VA Regional Office in Sioux Falls, Debra served as the women's veterans coordinator. She served as coordinator from 1990 to 2008, witnessing the evolving scope of care and attention to the unique issues affecting women veterans. She has also attended numerous VA outreach events to explain VA benefits to veterans and their dependents.

I want to commend Debra for her many years of service to this Nation's veterans and their families. Her honorable service has been marked by a true sense of dedication and commitment to the men and women who have served our Nation in the Armed Forces. Countless veterans have benefitted from her dedicated work, much of which was done behind the scenes but always with the best interests of the veterans in mind. I applaud her great service, and I am sure that she is retiring from the Department of Veterans Affairs with many rewarding experiences and memories.

I wish Debra and her husband, Jeff, all the best in retirement. As a life member of the Izaak Walton League of America, a 25-year member of the American Business Women's Association, and an avid gardener and dog lover, I am sure there are many endeavors awaiting her attention and effort. Again, I wish to recognize and commend Debra for her great service to our Nation. •

TRIBUTE TO NOLAN B. GIERE

• Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I know my colleagues and the American people