

seek to combat extremism around the globe. It is in the national interest of both countries for Indonesia to successfully complete its process of reform and democratization. However, this strengthening relationship must not come at the expense of a principled stance on human rights and accountability. As we commemorate Munir's death, we must remember that part of this commemoration includes addressing the continuing legacy of Indonesia's recent authoritarian past.

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 over 1,000, are heartbreaking and touching. To respect their efforts, I am submitting every e-mail sent to me through energy_prices@crapo.senate.gov 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:

Soaring gasoline prices are putting a tighter and tighter pinch on our pocket book for transportation needs. We've taken many steps to reduce the cost of fuel including reducing the way we drive as well as where and how often we drive. Savings from these steps, however, have not caused a reduction in our fuel costs. Rather the cost of fuel has jumped so rapidly, that these efficiencies are almost invisible.

We have an older home which needs a new roof but the cost of composition shingles has risen so significantly that other areas of our budget, if possible, will have to make up the difference. The aging process bringing the shingles to the end of their life is not slowing so a replacement delay is not possible. Working against these circumstances is the escalating price of petroleum products.

The price of products we purchase from the grocery store has risen in correlation with fuel costs. Our food budget is being strained to the limit because the cost of transportation to deliver the products to the grocery store is much more.

We have been advised by government in some communities that the cost of public services, e.g. law enforcement and fire protection will have to be decreased or curtailed because of the extreme jump in the cost of gasoline. We envision our property as well as persons becoming less safe.

We are thankful there are security regulations in place that prevent investors from being ripped off by unscrupulous people. At the same time, we are extremely concerned that in today's world speculators in commodities can manipulate the market. Why cannot the US Government take action immediately to bring control to such activity?

Wouldn't this be a good place to start and one where something could happen quickly?

We were citizens of Washington State several decades ago when a governmental entity, Washington Public Power and Supply System (WPPSS) attempted to construct nuclear power plants according to the wishes of the citizens. We watched millions and millions of hard-earned public dollars go down the drain as environmentalists' voices were given audience and commitments. We literally witnessed the promise of nuclear energy disappear. One of us was employed in State Government. One of our sons is now employed in a nuclear energy support position and we have an in-depth understanding of the benefits as well as risks. The fear tactics used by environmentalists (not facts and data) drove the actions of government.

We have a sleeping giant available in nuclear energy and facts and data, not emotions needs to govern our elected officials' decisions. The problems with energy are not new and have been spoken of frequently since we were born in the late 30's and early 40's. We would hope our Senators and members of Congress would wake up and do that which is best for today and tomorrow.

In a short 9.3 year period, the cost of regular grade gasoline has risen from \$0.899 per gallon to \$4.079 today. That is a 430% increase in cost. At the beginning of this period, we had time to make changes but have squandered them away with political posturing and contention.

Let us do something now. Now does not mean never or whenever. It means Never Override Wisdom. Help Please. Do something now.

KEITH and PATRICIA, *Idaho Falls.*

I appreciate the opportunity to share a little about how the high fuel prices are affecting my family. I have the great opportunity to work as a teacher in the public school setting and to work on the family farm in the summer. I have experienced higher prices for fuel and everything else that is needed (i.e. food, clothes, etc.) over the past year. When everything is going up but our paychecks it makes it difficult to raise a family. While already living with limited means, it is hard to cut back the necessities when all we are there aren't many. The family farm is also suffering. My father-in-law is considering selling a portion of the land to pay for overhead costs of running the rest of the lawn. He may also have to lease the ground out as he can no longer afford the expenses that go along with the small operation. This farm has been in the family for over 75 years. My wife struggles with her part time job because as she goes to work for several hours a day, one hour of the day goes to pay the fuel to get there.

I guess that I could go on and on about how we are all struggling because the high cost of energy; fuel for cars, propane for heat, electricity, higher food cost, etc... but I guess that I would like to share my thoughts on our dependence on foreign energy sources and the hold these entities have on us. I believe that we have been blessed in our country with the resources that we need. More and more of our jobs are being outsourced to other countries and we are buying more of their products. Because we have these oil reserves that we are not accessing because a minority squeaked and got the grease, there is a serious problem. The USA is known for high standards in both safety and environmental protection for anything that we do. If a few Caribou have their grazing area slightly interrupted because of an oil well, it is okay. They will adapt and everything will be okay. Conservation and Protection is very important. I believe that our God has given us this great land for our use. We must be

careful and use it wisely, not foolishly. I believe that our current practices are foolish. We have made ourselves a target and it is hurting us all. Our country is so far in debt and our dollar is worth less and less. This has to change. Even if the use of our own oil is temporary, I believe that it will send the message to the oil cartel that we are not solely dependant on them.

I also believe that we need to stop the large oil companies from hindering our development of technologies of alternate fuel sources and different engines. With all our knowledge today, why has the internal combustion engine, basically, not changed in all that time. We hear of Hydrogen Fuel Cells, Electric Cars, BioFuel, etc... but somehow these ideas are not making it full time the consumer. Things have got to get better. I shutter to think that it is going to get worse for it gets better.

KEVIN, *Georgetown.*

Thank you for being an advocate for Idahoans in Washington. As you know, those of us in sparsely populated states often feel disenfranchised and like our voices are not heard, even that our votes are for naught. I, for one, am grateful that you are a strong voice for Idaho.

You asked for stories of how the high cost of energy is impacting our lives. My story will not have the power of those who must drive long distances to work or those who are engaged in providing our nation with food and who find their very livelihood threatened. I am a widow; I lost my husband a year ago. The last year has been lonely and bleak in many ways, and I miss my husband more than I can express. Our children all live far away—the closest is in Portland, Oregon, one in Houston, another in London, England, another in California. While I do have a few family members here in Idaho Falls, including my sister who lives with me, but my children are who are my greatest comfort since the death of my husband. They cannot afford to travel to see me. And now I cannot travel to see them, nor can my sister see her grandchildren in Boise very often because we cannot afford the gas. In fact, I have not left the city limits of Idaho Falls since Thanksgiving because we simply cannot afford to travel.

My house is all electric—a change we made in the 1970s due to the oil embargo. My heat bills were close to \$300 a month during this very long and very cold winter we just had. As a disabled widow living on a fixed income, this increase was a burden, to say the least. And I know the city of Idaho Falls is preparing to increase our utility bills. I cannot even imagine what really poor people are doing, but if the prices go up, we will have people right here in Bonneville County who will freeze to death. And I am sick at heart thinking of what the next winters brings when I think of gas and electricity and food even for my small household.

The cost of everything has gone up, food prices are skyrocketing, and the trickle-down will be a burden of those of us in the middle and lower classes. When people cannot pay their bills or pay for the basic necessities of life they become desperate. And we all know the most dangerous thing in the world is not a fanatic, but someone who is desperate.

Please help us, Sen. Crapo; please plead our cause and the cause of this nation before Congress. This is not about Democrats or Republicans, liberals or conservatives. This is about the people who elected them becoming desperate with no end in sight. Please tell them we need responsible representatives, not posturing demigods out to line their pockets and further their own agendas. I pray for the day that we can tell the oil producing nations (except for those in North

America) to go to hell, that we will no longer need their oil. It is time this nation ceased being a hostage to those who would destroy us. Enough is enough.

I am sorry this is so rambling and poorly expressed. But Sen. Crapo, I know you're a good man and that you truly speak for us in honesty and dignity. Thank you for letting me say my piece. God Bless you and your staff.

STELLA, *Idaho Falls.*

Thank you for providing a convenient avenue for the public to hear your personal view on this important issue and for giving the opportunity to let our opinions also be heard. It is comforting to know that the people's representative is at least attempting to represent the people. Here's my take on the situation:

I own a '98 Honda Civic—hardly a gas-guzzler. I recently paid my car off, but now my gas payments are equal to what my monthly payments used to be. I pay more for gas each month than I do for car insurance. I live like the majority of Idahoans probably do: I drive to work and school during the week; I go to church and visit family on the weekend. I make a modest living and drive a modest car, and yet I am paying premium prices for regular gasoline. I feel the pain at the gas pump, at the grocery store, and in my wallet.

Fundamentally, I see two sides of the solution to our problem—the domestic side and the foreign side. Domestically we should be producing and refining more of our own oil. We know where to find it. It is in ANWR, it is off-shore, and it is in many other places that should be made available to "We the People". (It is our country, after all.) It is possible to safely and responsibly recover and refine our own oil. We the People need to provide incentives to American companies for oil exploration and recovery. We need to make it possible for American companies to build new oil refineries. All this needs to happen while simultaneously discouraging the formation of monopolies as we continue to build the national oil industry. We should also continue to encourage private research and development of new energy sources by American companies. We should not be waiting for the world's answer to oil to come from Europe or Japan. America leads the world in power and in ideas; we should also lead the world in energy. That is energy independence.

The foreign answer is a lot more complicated, but it has a lot to do with the notion of free trade (and it applies to more than just the trade of oil). If an oil producing nation pays its employees slave wages while US companies must pay union wages, is it free trade? No. If they fail to comply with environmental standards to which US companies are bound, is it free trade? No. If the nation is a known sponsor or sympathizer of terrorism or drug trafficking, is it free trade? No. If they deny basic human rights to women, children, a certain race/nationality, or a specific religion, is it free trade? No. If we believe these are basic standards of civilization for our own people, how can we support governments that clearly do not abide by the same standards, and yet still call it free trade? In good conscience, we clearly cannot. So what do we do? Impose tariffs or embargos? Maybe. How about trade incentives for like-minded countries? Like I said, it is complicated. The answer may be that we just work to set things right one step at a time, and continue to move forward. We know oil is more than likely just a temporary solution to our energy needs, and we know we would like to achieve energy independence, so if We the People are all

united in our determination to approach that goal, the solution may become clear.

CRAIG, *Meridian.*

I am responding to your newsletter soliciting stories of how high petroleum prices and energy costs impact average Idaho citizens and families like mine. Please read my story.

I am a husband and father of six children. This escalation of energy costs has a huge impact upon us. Gas is up past \$4.10 per gallon. I commute from Meridian to Boise 5 days a week. My daily fluctuating 8–10 hour work schedule does not allow for carpooling or Commuteride or bus. So public transportation does not help me in the least. And there are many Idahoans where public transportation is just impractical with our many work schedules. I may do errands to or from work as I pass by a store on my way to eliminate an extra car trip. We also travel to our church in Nampa twice each Sunday. My wife drives her minivan to grocery shop, take kids to music lessons, dentist, eye doctor, little league games, the library, etc. and as much as possible she combine trips to conserve fuel. We may eat out as a family once a month.

In addition to soaring gas prices, Idaho Power was approved for another 6% hike for electrical rates. Intermountain Gas also recently implemented a similar rate hike. My property taxes in Meridian went up 40% per year in 2006 and 2007.

Senator, we are financially squeezed in so many ways it would seem unbelievable if it weren't true. We grow a few vegetables in our small garden. We buy goods in bulk when we can. We use coupons and watch for the best sales. We do not have cable TV or high-speed internet. My wife cuts everyone's hair but her own. We live very frugally and frankly we are just getting by. But let me also say, by God's grace, we are a happy family.

I look at the stimulus money we received as a way to pay off some credit card debt we've accumulated. We have little savings with the poor economy. So with the stimulus money we'll buy gas, put food on the table, pay for the roof over our head, buy the kids some clothes we could not get at the local thrift store. Maybe have some money left over to go out to dinner once or twice or see a movie in a theater for the first time this year. It certainly cannot be used for many luxuries as our buying power is shrinking day-by-day due to the high cost of energy driving up the cost of everything from food and fuel to goods and services.

Senator, I am sad to say, you and your colleagues in the House and Senate, Republican and Democrat alike, are for the most part responsible for America's poor economic condition especially as it relates to energy costs. You have the influence and power to make positive changes but you thus far have refused to do anything but blame the energy companies and demand that automakers manufacture cars that nobody wants to buy. Stop blaming energy producing companies for high energy costs when it is largely the fault of Congress for overregulation, high taxation, and prevention of domestic acquisition!

Why don't you actually do something to end this crisis? You proffer wind and solar power which are currently very inefficient, expensive and are decades away from having any real impact on our plight. You fund public transportation that only benefits the very urban areas. You subsidize burning our food supply (corn)—which drives up food prices—to produce ethanol which creates more pollution due to energy used in its production and its inefficiency in our automobile engines. You allow our economic policy to be controlled by the Marxist groups in

our country, i.e. environmentalists, liberal special interest groups, and the political media that have no other desire than to turn our wonderful democracy backward (economically) that it may become the utopian socialist state they idolize.

You asked for my solutions to help the American people out of this crisis. Please note that my suggestions, unlike those typical of Congress, will not cost the American taxpayers anything. They are as follows:

1. The President needs to address the American people and declare an Economic State of Emergency and by Executive Order mandate immediate and drastic measures to increase domestic fuel production (oil, natural gas, coal).

2. Drill for oil in the USA now! Alaska, Montana, Wyoming, off-shore, anywhere there are great reserves of oil and natural gas. We can drill in more efficient and environmentally friendly ways than any other nation. We do not need to fund private companies to produce more energy, just get out of their way and allow them to do it! Net charge to taxpayers: \$0.

3. Fast track building of oil refineries. Eliminate years of red tape. Look at converting existing moth-balled military installations near ports and energy sources. Just permit private companies to do it. Net charge to taxpayers: \$0.

4. Mandate a single environmental friendly blend of gasoline for all of the USA. Eliminate the six summer/winter blends of fuel for different US regions which create artificial shortages and inflate prices due to limited refining capacities and inability to legally use particular blends outside EPA specified areas. Just have all the states use the one blend that works the best. Net charge to taxpayers: \$0.

5. Stop mandating burning our food for fuel! Corn used for ethanol is driving up the cost of everything we eat just as fast as oil prices drive up the cost of transporting them. Congress is to blame for this! This year, for the first time in history, the USA will import wheat to feed its citizens. This is an outrage! Do not continue to subsidize ethanol! Net charge to taxpayers: \$0.

6. Stop wasting taxpayer money by buying carbon credits for the federal government. Ridiculous waste of taxpayer money! Need I say more? Net charge to taxpayers: \$0.

7. Remove the pending phase-out of (inexpensive) incandescent bulbs in favor of the costly and toxic fluorescent bulbs. That phase-out appeared in the last so-called "energy bill." Net charge to taxpayers: \$0.

8. Do not increase taxes on oil companies. Taxes have never produced one drop of oil. Stop punishing the companies that make our economy possible. Remember your history? American ingenuity coupled with cheap, abundant energy resources built this country! Net cost to taxpayers: \$0.

9. Denounce those who would legislate based on the man-made global warming environmental hoax. Every government mandated policy that flows from this unproven, unscientific, misguided environmental "religion" drags the economy down further. The latest word from the scientific community is the globe is now cooling. Go figure! Net cost to taxpayers: \$0.

If we work together, we can rebuild America into the strong nation it once was by putting it back on the road to energy independence. But Congress must be willing to act now; by swallowing its collective pride and by removing obstacles that hinder our potential for economic success from becoming reality.

VANCE, *Meridian.*