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CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — SENATE

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pick our cases. In fact, if anyone had told me that my company would be before the U.S. Supreme Court defending inane comments by Cher and Nicole Ritchie, I would have said you were crazy. But I would certainly not have known at the outset the nature of this speech, and who said it, makes absolutely no difference. Because as the core of this case is an absolute threat to the First Amendment, it is an affront to the core values and tenets that are unscripted on live television. If we are found in violation, just think about the radical ramifications for live programming. I don’t think we are going to hear from the President, or the President’s Cornhusker overlords, the V-CHIP, for their children. Cable, satellite, and telco video providers have finely-tuned, comprehensive parental controls. Let’s forget for a moment we are the only ones who are responsible for enforcing the law in a way that is consistent with the intent of the FCC. These tools allow adults to protect their kids while still being able to access shows they love.

We as media companies also have a responsibility to rate shows accurately and consistently so the V-CHIP works as it should. And, as I said earlier, we need to be responsible for content. I think we need to do something different when we see content that is extremely out of touch with the majority of the country.

We are retired on a fixed income and we work hard all our lives and we try to get a vacation. It has been building new refineries and recovering oil all of our coasts since the 1970s. We, as a country, need to see the beginnings of this downward slide in energy prices.

Look, I am not insensitive to the fact that we as media companies also have a responsibility to rate shows accurately and consistently so the V-CHIP works as it should. And, as I said earlier, we need to be responsible for content. I think we need to do something different when we see content that is extremely out of touch with the majority of the country. We are retired on a fixed income and we work hard all our lives and we try to get a vacation. It has been building new refineries and recovering oil all of our coasts since the 1970s. We, as a country, need to see the beginnings of this downward slide in energy prices.

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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 sending in their thoughts, which, numbering well over 1,200, are heartbreakingly 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 time 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 I hope it will 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:

We are glad to hear that at least one of our politicians is concerned about how the gasoline prices are affecting the middle class. Most people feel that America is extremely out of touch with the majority of the country.

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now becomes an expensive venture just to get to the Sawtooths or White Clouds.

TIM, Boise.

I am contacting my Congressman about energy just as you have encouraged your constituents to do. I am in dismay, however, at the continued opportunism and political grandstanding. The only answer, it seems to me from many is to drill more oil. Every credible energy scientist and economist knows that this will do little or nothing to curb our foreign oil dependency and to reduce the cost of fuel. Yet, despite this ever-predictable call for more domestic oil production, you fail to point out that speculation is driving up the cost of oil.” So I ask: why are you and your colleagues still calling for more drilling when you know what it is you can do about it? Why are you not regulating “the speculation now driving up the cost of oil”? Commodities speculators are at the heart of extreme oil prices, not supply and demand imbalances. We do not want to hear any red herring arguments about the average Joe’s retirement portfolio owning the bulk of oil company shares. The issue is speculation; the answer is regulation of speculation.

JASON, Moscow.

Last week I heard on the news that you have received many letters and e-mails related to high gas prices. Hence, I have decided to write in and give you my two cents on the matter.

I believe that the primary culprit that is causing high gas prices is globalization; particularly in the emerging economies of China and India. The rapid growth of their economies has drastically increased their demand for petroleum. Along with developing a comprehensive energy policy, the executive and legislative branches of our federal government need to re-examine our economic policies, particularly in areas of foreign trade. During the past two decades, the American middle class has gotten the short end of the straw when it has come to previous trade policies. One does not have to look farther than our orchard industry in the Treasure Valley. These trade policies have really only benefitted the very wealthy in our country. When I was in college ten years ago, we talked about globalization in one of my classes and how if China copied the U.S.’s consumption then we were looking at higher gas prices for all. We have changed our daily living dramatically, and it is not a happy way to be in your retirement years. We urge you and all of Congress to start drilling in our nation and bring back more nuclear power plants. We must relieve ourselves of our dependency on oil ASAP. Lord only knows what our grandchildren have to look forward to at this insane rate!

ANGELO, Hayden Lake.

I will get right to the point—my wife and I are out of money. Our incomes have not changed and our incomes used to pay our bills with money to spare. We have a 91 Honda wagon and a 99 minivan, we pay $50 and $70 to fill them up. Grocery prices are up 100% in the last couple years because gas prices have gone up. Expensive gas has almost made everything else expensive. Today, after filling both our cars with gas and grocery shopping, (with a list, mind you), we ran out of money. For the first time ever, we put groceries on a credit card. We are not credit card people, so this is anathema to us.

When I turn on the TV or radio I hear some politician telling us that drilling will not make a difference for ten years. As an engineering student, I cannot stomach that level of (deception). First of all, I do not believe that is true and second, if it were true, then we sure better get started. What if every time an education tax refund is received, we were told by saying that we would not see the results for 12 years so let us not do it. What if I told my child not to go to college because they would not see a payoff for at least four years so do not bother. We are financially dying and our so-called leaders are regurgitating some of the stupidest things I have ever heard.

The bottom line is this: This planet does not exist for its own sake, it exists for ours. We are not here by some cosmic accident; we are here by design and our designer gave us the tools we need to live and prosper. The failure to drill for new oil and create new refineries is the result of environmental philosophies, which are based on evolutionary thinking. To the environmentalist, our purpose here is no more significant than that of any other animal, and we, by accident of evolution, happen to have the power to sustain or destroy this environment. Without a cosmic caretaker, the earth itself becomes the only god because it is the only one to show us his worship by reducing or eliminating human impact upon it and by treating humans as vermin. It is an old religion and I fall away from it. The environment is suffering at the hands of it is misguided priests.

Please do your best to release energy, especially nuclear and underused market system. Irrational environmental policy and regulation have prohibited natural market forces from creating more supply and oil prices based on speculation, not production. We are paying almost any real connection to supply. Please work to make this kind of price setting illegal and please work to release drill. We have a huge commodity from the free market by socialists controls and uneducated environmental policy. The more you claim to represent, are hurt. Make the American dream possible by making it affordable.

JASON, Boise.

The rising cost of fuel has a tremendous effect on my household consisting of my husband and myself. I am sole support for our family. Senator, as you know, wages in Idaho fall behind many other states. The cost of gas is outrageous and I blame the Congress for a lot of it. Why are we not drilling in Alaska? Why are we not building refineries away from coasts where hurricanes have a tendency to hit? Why are not all of our refineries running full bore? In my family, an oil contractor from the South who retired, I forget his name but he wrote a book, “A Grand Party No More”. Before he retired, he went to see for himself where the oil was going to drill in Alaska. He said there would be no harm to anyone or anything, it is so far out in no man’s land. He said if there was a leak it would be of no consequence as it would freeze the minute it hit the ground. It is time we push the environmentalists to the wall and out of the way. I believe in saving money and I believe there is no danger to any of these where we would drill. I recognize that we need to become independent of so much oil but how do we do this given a 100% jobless market and we paid for. Not the best gas mileage but it is paid for. I cannot afford any kind of a car payment for one of those new hybrids. Rebates are not free. Millions are exchanged for $26,000. The cost of a new car buys an awful lot of gas. My income does not allow for any car payment.

Nothing is going crazy! A loaf of bread that cost $2.89 last year is now $4.29. Anything with corn or wheat is gone out of sight. We pay farmers not to grow wheat and now I hear we have to pay to grow our wheat in America. America has sold its soul to China, Mexico, Japan. If we were to ever go into another world war, we could not even build a steel mill left in America? Is there a textile mill left in America? You would be pretty
hard pressed to find one, a sad statement on us. As to what I do? No trips during the week except to work and back. If I can do any errands or projects, otherwise it is till the weekend. I plan one trip, one circle. If something is missed, too bad, it is missed. The real clincher is this, I tithe to my church, spend the Lord 10% of my income. It costs me almost as much, $10 less, to keep my car in gasoline between paychecks. Now I think it is pretty awful when I have cut a company as much as I give the Lord. He gives me everything I have, the gas company gives me nothing except anger when I hear of the profits they make. And I think that pretty well sums it up, 10% to the Lord vs. almost as much to the gas company!

Dianne, Hayden Lake.

I am a taxi driver here in Boise. In a year’s time, the cost to fill my tank has increased nearly 100% but my average fare has remained static. If it were not for my military retirement, I would no longer make enough to cover basic costs and make a profit. I am 61 years old and am not practiced in a marketable skill so the prospect of making a move to another occupation is nil. My only reasonable hope is that Boise will increase our per mile fees in the near future; it is unlikely that fuel prices will decrease in the near future.

I have been watching your position on domestic drilling with interest. Though alternative energy sources are imperative for the future of America, I am pleased to see that you share my position that energy self-reliance is the immediate solution to our present problems. I applaud you and urge you to continue your good work and prosecute this agenda with rigor.

Earle, Boise.

Not only is the fuel much too high but I cannot find employment. I am over 60, have experience, but it seems I am “over-qualified” or I need more “experience”. What a lot of rubbish! I call it age discrimination, but that is difficult to prove. With the fuel prices so high, if I do find employment, it will take a huge chunk of my pay just to get back and forth to work. Are unemployment benefits going to be extended for Idaho residents? My benefits ended this week, no hope of a job; I need more “experience”. What a kidding! I am 61 years old and am not practiced in a marketable skill so the prospect of making a move to another occupation is nil. My only reasonable hope is that Boise will increase our per mile fees in the near future; it is unlikely that fuel prices will decrease in the near future.

As Director of Gritman Adult Day Health which provides day health care for elders who want to remain in their own home in Moscow and Latah County, I am including an article from the NY Times which talks about the cost of gas and how it affects rural elders. It is very sad that these folks who often aren’t able to drive are so affected by the cost of gas. Please do everything you can to remedy this: http://online.wsj.com/article/SB121263949221947243.html?mod=googlenews-wsj

Barr, Moscow.

Gasoline prices are now far too high for the average family, and causing increasing rises in the cost of living in many other areas. For instance, every time one goes to the grocery store, an increase in pricing is noted on items, and thus causing many to have to go without needed supplies. Saving a percentage of income has become just a dream for many, and others cannot make ends meet without going into further debt.

Beverly, Parma.

Yes, gas has gotten way out of hand. Do what you can to decrease the costs and return to a life with some normalcy.

Diana, Kootenai.

Thank you for at least noticing that we have a problem with the cost. I do not believe, however, that anything can be done to change this at this time, with the price of fuel going up and our health care premiums grow as well, so you never see any savings. Thanks again; good luck with this effort.

Clint, Emmett.

RETIREMENT OF WAYNE RIDDLE

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I welcome this opportunity to pay tribute to Wayne Riddle, who is retiring at the end of this year from the Congressional Research Service. Wayne is the model of a dedicated and talented public servant. He has spent his career working out of the public eye for the greater good, providing excellent assistance to all of us in Congress for over three decades, and taking time to mentor younger staffers.

Wayne is a graduate of the University of Virginia. He earned a master’s degree in economics from George Washington University while working at the Congressional Research Service, where he has spent the past 36 years serving as a key analyst on elementary and secondary education, and twice as head of the Education and Labor Section at CRS.

Throughout that time, Congress has given high priority to strengthening the Nation’s schools, and Wayne has been helping us immensely every step of the way. He began not long after the passage of the original Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965—the Federal Government’s major program to improve educational opportunities for low-income students. Wayne has been indispensable in our work on every subsequent reauthorization of the act and on all our other efforts on elementary and secondary education, including the Goals 2000 Act during the Clinton administration and the No Child Left Behind Act during the current Bush administration. His guidance, support and knowledge on issues big and small have been invaluable to us time and again.

As Wayne retires to devote more time to his family, I know that his colleagues at CRS will miss him, and so will we. I wish him a long, healthy, and happy retirement. He certainly deserves it, because he has served our country well, and made a very real difference in the lives of countless children who have benefited in their education because of his expertise and dedication.

REMEMBERING TONY DEAN

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the passing of a very close friend of mine, Tony Dean. As one of this Nation’s foremost conservationists, one would be hard put to find someone who cared more about wildlife and the environment. Tony passed away on October 19.

I had known Tony for years with his regular television program, but I was fortunate enough to get to know him much better in my 2002 Senate campaign. He told me that he was willing to do whatever I needed him to do, and he was honest to his word. With his natural and effective TV and television audiences, Tony starred in two commercials that were critical to the success of my 2002 campaign. I have no doubt that Tony’s support was crucial, though it resulted in many texts to his courage. Even amidst the backlash of his supporting my campaign, he said, “Tim, I know I did the right thing, and I’d do it again in a second.” Tony stared down the people who threatened him, and he refused to blink.

During Senator Ted Kennedy’s eulogy of his brother Robert, Senator Kennedy stated that, “Few are willing to brave the disapproval of their fellows, the censure of their colleagues, the wrath of their society. Moral courage is a rarer commodity than bravery in battle or great intelligence. Yet it is the one essential, vital quality for those who seek to change a world that yields most painfully to change.” Tony had all those qualities, though most importantly, moral courage. And Tony Dean had moral courage.

It was my pleasure to have worked with Tony and I would like to offer my condolences to his family, friends, and fellow advocates. They have much to be proud of, and it is my hope that their memories will be rich with the great many accomplishments he achieved during his career. Those of us who loved him pray that what he was to us and what he wished for others will someday come to pass for the greater good. I am grateful to you, Tony. More than any of us can say.

FORT POLK BARRACKS PRIVATIZATION PILOT PROGRAM

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, on September 27, the Senate passed the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009, which the President signed into law on October 14. The legislation includes critical provisions that will directly improve the quality of life for our men and women in uniform, support needed reforms in the operations of the Department of Defense and provide our soldiers, sailors, Air Force personnel and marines with the tools they need to defend our freedom. I thank and commend Senator Levin and our colleagues on the Armed Services Committee for the thorough work on this detailed legislation and their perseverance in crafting the legislation in a difficult and at times uncertain process.

There were a number of filled floor amendments to the bill that were not