

Also many years ago we had glass bottles and people employed in glass factories making them. We could save a lot of petrol by getting away from so much plastic. Glass is far easier to recycle than plastic and it is reusable.

It is time [Congress got past partisanship and figured out how to solve these problems]. They should be paying us by now not the other way around. Let us put an end to the financial handout to them and start using those funds to build our own country.

LUCIAN.

Thank you for your recent communication regarding your vote on the climate change bill. I must say that I disagree with your decision, despite being spared an increase in gasoline costs. With 5 kilowatt-h/sq meter of solar income, in addition to our hydroelectric power and category 4-5 wind, Idaho should be a net green energy exporter. Just because the oil companies, in times of record profits, decide to squeeze the consumer, does not mean we can make the short-sighted choice to think only with our wallets. We need an energy policy that provides true security—a diversified portfolio of energy sources—not continued investment in a delivery system that is outmoded, wasteful, and polluting. I am stretched in this economy, but I would gladly put out the extra money for the long term solution of improved air quality (have you seen the brown air over the Treasure Valley recently), cutting off money supply to unstable Mideast regimes, and a chance for my son to have a functional environment in which to live. Please stop making short-term political decisions when you have the opportunity to show true leadership and thoughtfully consider how to achieve a sustainable future for our country. It is not too hard for us, for heaven's sake, we are Americans!

LISA, Boise.

The cost for fuel oil has gone from \$.60 per gal. to over \$4 per gallon, raising my monthly heating costs in the winter from \$85 to \$353 per month. I also drive around 40,000 miles per year for my job and while costs have skyrocketed, the business deduction has not, which is, in fact, a tax increase to go with the punishing costs. To add to these problems, my wife's mother, who lives in Dillon, Montana, has cancer, and lives at her trailer home for now. She is on Medicaid, has limited options for care and depends on us for many things. It is a six-hour drive. We get reasonable good mileage but that country, with the unpredictable weather, has a negative impact on our 26 miles per gallon. The cost of the trip has gone from \$100 to \$400 in just the last year and ½. My wife stayed home and raised our children while I provided for them so she has no Social Security. I am self-employed, so there is no retirement waiting except for what I can provide and I have used that to pay my taxes till it ran out. My wife was injured very badly 2½ years ago without insurance and I must pay the county back over the next 15 years. I realize that these things are adversity and I can, with hard work and the blessings of God, overcome them and still succeed. The biggest obstacle in my way is the very government that has sworn to uphold and defend the constitution that was inspired to protect me. Those who are bent on a socialistic society are destroying my hope for a future and the hope of my children.

RICHARD, Caldwell.

TRIBUTE TO ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE STUDENT VOLUNTEERS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I wish to draw the attention of the Senate to a

group of selfless volunteers at St. Michael's College in Colchester, VT, who sacrificed time with their families and friends this past holiday season to ensure that Vermonters in need of emergency services had someone to call upon even on the Christmas holiday.

St. Michael's Fire and Rescue was founded in 1969 and has been staffed and operated by student volunteers ever since. Donald Sutton, affectionately known as "Pappy" around the firehouse, helped start the organization as dean and director of campus security following the untimely death of a student athlete on campus. Nearly 40 years later, the organization serves as the primary ambulance and fire service for a large portion of the State's most populous region, Chittenden County.

The student volunteers who make this organization run find time outside of their rigorous course work to not only be on call but also to complete hundreds of hours of Emergency Medical Technician training and Firefighter training. While their classmates may be battling another school on the ice, on the field, or on the court—St. Michael's Fire and Rescue members are risking their lives in real-life emergency situations, aiding the sick, and putting out fires. Even during the holidays, when schools shut down and students usually go home to visit with family, these students stand watch for their community.

While I was at my family farm in Middlesex this holiday season, I came across a Christmas Day Burlington Free Press article highlighting the sacrifice of these students. I ask unanimous consent that the text of that article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Burlington Free Press, Dec. 25, 2008]

NO BREAK FOR STUDENTS ON RESCUE SQUAD (by Joel Banner Baird)

COLCHESTER.—Their classmates might delight in holiday downtime: late nights, late mornings, heavy meals and torpor.

On the night before Christmas, a student-staffed rescue squad at St. Michael's College remains on-call and alert—by choice. Time off will come to squad Capt. Kristen Dalton, 21, later this week, after a 90-hour week at the College Parkway station.

Her fellow St. Mike's seniors, Mark Petersen and Peter Cronin, both 21, opted for holiday duty, too.

This is more than a club. The squad's 20 members are first-responders who you see tending to car-wreck victims and heart-attack patients. They respond to more than 2,700 calls every year from Chittenden County residents, most of them in Colchester, Winooski and Hinesburg. Dalton looked cheerful on a slow Wednesday morning.

The biology major and pre-med student said she typically logs 40 to 50 hours per week at St. Michael's Fire and Rescue.

Each volunteer, certified as an Emergency Medical Technician, puts in at least 24 hours per week, including a 12-hour overnight shift at the station.

"We hold ourselves to a 3-minute response time," Dalton said. "I throw a jumpsuit over

my pajamas, I'm in my boots, and I'm out the door."

Like his captain, Petersen joined the squad as a freshman. He said the commitment taught him how to juggle academic commitments.

"It really, really forces you into time management," he said.

Another learning curve brought him up to speed as a member of a larger, adult community.

"What we do here is a lot of consequence-based decision-making," he said. "You see the results of your actions right away. It makes you step back and say, 'Hey—I'm not a kid anymore.'"

Interrupting him, a call came through dispatch: An infant in Plattsburgh, N.Y., needed to be transported to Fletcher Allen.

Petersen and Cronin did a final inspection of the neo-natal intensive care truck—one of the station's three ambulances—and headed out to pick up a specialist at the hospital en route to New York.

Christmas Eve's activities would be anybody's guess. Wrapped packages lay beneath a decorated tree in the ready room. Cronin's parents said they'd cook breakfast for the volunteers on Christmas morning.

Dalton said the squad would lose almost half of its members after graduation. She's already planning a spring recruitment drive.

"This attracts a lot of different people—people who want to do something good with their time," she said.

As if on cue, Kate Soons of Colchester, a self-described "lingering alum," entered with an overnight bag. She'd heard about the Plattsburgh call and wanted to provide backup.

Soons served with the squad in the 1980s, and now is a nurse at Fletcher Allen. She also coordinates regional emergency care training, and keeps tabs on St. Mike's graduates who have chosen to stay active in the field.

Begun in 1969, the rescue squad is the busiest volunteer ambulance unit in the state, she said.

"It's a big family," she said.

Soons' husband, Pete Soons, also served with rescue volunteers as an undergraduate. He directs the college's department of public safety, overseeing campus security, rescue and fire squads.

Unlike the rescue volunteers, St. Michael's 25 firefighters have an off-campus affiliation; they're a battalion in the Colchester Center Volunteer Fire Company.

Standing between a hose truck and an engine, company firefighter Gary Zeno discussed hydrant fittings with freshman Andrea Dillner, 19. Still in training, Dillner will accompany squads as a rookie until she qualifies for hands-on work.

Nonetheless, she volunteered.

After a briefing with Zeno, she headed upstairs, past a wall-sized calendar of shift schedules and birthdays, to take a nap.

Dalton, coffee in hand, looked as wide-awake as ever on the night before Christmas.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RETIREMENT OF CHARLENE DAVIS

• Mr. BOND. Mr. President, today I acknowledge and pay tribute to Charlene Davis's dedication and service to the people of Missouri as she retires from the Jackson County Election Board of Election Commissioners after 34 years.

During her tenure with the board, Charlene has helped modernize our election technology, improving the reliability and integrity of elections.