

policy. If not, the [conservative voices will] have less leadership in Congress, and we will have an energy crisis in the greatest county in the world.

P.S. Can we get some more oil refineries as well?

CORY.

First off, thank you for soliciting comments from your constituents.

Everyone is concerned about, and affected by energy prices. Gas prices are just the tip of the iceberg. Food prices, goods and services prices, utility bills, natural gas up double from last year, airline prices, the housing/credit crisis and a very weak dollar are all affected by our energy emergency. This is not a matter of choice. Either we pursue energy independence or we risk losing the America our forefathers created and our brave soldiers have died fighting for.

Why are we the only civilized country not aggressively pursuing energy independence? France is over 70% nuclear, the EU has plans for over 20 coal plants across Europe, Canada is drilling near our northeastern border, Russia recently gave major tax breaks to oil companies to explore inside their borders and find alternative energy, Brazil is aggressively drilling, China is building dozens of coal plants, nuclear plants and hydroelectric dams, they have also secured a lease (from Cuba) 50 miles off the shore of Key West, Florida. The US hasn't built a refinery in over 30 years. There is something wrong with this picture. Is everyone else on the wrong energy path? Or could it be we are falling behind? I think the answer is obvious.

To me the solution is twofold. Short term and long term. Short term: Allow private industry to aggressively pursue all sources of energy within our borders. We are sitting on billions of barrels of oil, oil shale and coal. Go get it now! We have nuclear technology, coal to oil technology, wind, solar. Long term: Offer incentives to private industries to create new alternative energy sources. American innovators have proved time and time again they are capable of getting the job done. Get the government out of their way and let them lead the world into the next generation of energy production.

DENNIS.

I am writing concerning your call for Idahoans to tell about how oil prices are affecting us. Fortunately I live very close to work so I do not drive much to commute. I do however have to transport children to day care, school and other activities. Trips are almost out of the question now.

Having looked into the facts I fully support drilling in ANWR and OCS. I find it disturbing that we are not already doing so when I hear that other countries, especially some that are not overly friendly to us, are permitting to drill off of our coasts. I think the U.S. should pursue all avenues of collecting domestic fuel sources including coal shale to oil and nuclear. This country should pursue nuclear power in large scale, hydrogen, and other alternatives as well. The fact remains, as you know, that we will need petroleum-based fuels for the foreseeable future and we should produce some of our own.

I think the ethanol projects are a joke as corn is a food product that has so many other uses.

BRANDON, Idaho Falls.

The most difficult part of paying so much at the pump is feeling that the whole situation is—at best—the fault of our Washington politicians who have been influenced by environmentalists who seem determined to return our lifestyle to the horse and buggy era.

The most vital step in all you propose is to start claiming our drilling rights in the gulf

and to pass legislation which allows us to take advantage of our own oil reserves. The environmentalists have hijacked this whole country by tying the hands of oil companies, who would doubtless do everything possible to lessen our dependence on foreign oil by drilling within our own borders.

DEBORAH.

## ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

### REMEMBERING JOSEPH SONNEMAN

• Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, I wish to commemorate the life of a very special resident of my home State of Alaska, longtime political activist Joe Sonneman.

Dr. Sonneman passed away March 8, 2009, from Lou Gehrig's disease. He was 64.

He made his unique mark on Alaska beginning in 1971, when he first visited to research a doctoral dissertation on the relationship between oil revenues and state government. He returned after graduate school and lived in the 49th State for most of the rest of his life. In true Alaskan fashion he proved himself to be a jack of many trades. Dr. Sonneman—known most often around his adopted hometown of Juneau only as “Joe”—was a photographer, postal worker, public policy analyst and taxi driver. He also earned a law degree from Georgetown University and was a frequent candidate for Congress.

On behalf of his family and his many friends I ask today that we honor his memory. I ask that his obituary, published March 10, 2009, in the Juneau Empire, be printed into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

The information follows:

[From the Juneau Empire, Mar. 10, 2009]

(By Joseph Sonneman)

Longtime Juneau political activist Dr. Joseph Sonneman died early March 8, 2009, at Providence Regional Medical Center in Everett, Wash., after a three-year struggle with ALS, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease. He was 64.

He was born in Chicago in 1944, and attended Chicago public schools.

After serving in the U.S. Army from 1963 to 1966, including service as a radar repairman in Korea, he earned a Bachelor of Science in economics from the University of Chicago, and master's and doctorate degrees from Claremont graduate school. While in the master's program in government finance, he was an intern at the NASA Johnson Space Center in Houston. He first came to Juneau in 1971 to conduct research for his doctoral dissertation on the effect of oil income on Alaskan government financial decisions.

When he finished graduate school, he returned to Alaska where he worked as a photographer, budget analyst, taxi driver, heavy equipment oiler on the Alaska pipeline, postal worker, and university instructor. He became interested in the law and earned a J.D. degree from Georgetown School of Law in 1989. He was a member of the Alaska, Hawaii and Washington, D.C. Bar Associations and conducted a law and legal research practice in Juneau.

He was active in politics all his life, and served on numerous local and state Demo-

cratic Party committees and as Alaska Democratic Party treasurer. He ran for Mayor of Juneau in 1973. He also ran in the primaries for the U.S. House in 1974, and for the U. S. Senate in 1978, 1992, 1996, and in 1998 succeeded in becoming the Democratic Party nominee for U.S. Senate but lost the election to Republican incumbent Frank Murkowski.

He was a member of Veterans of Foreign War Post 5559; Pioneers of Alaska Juneau Igloo Number 6; Juneau World Affairs Council; Juneau Chapter of AARP; and Paralyzed Veterans of America, and served on the Juneau Commission on the Aging.

As a photographer, he followed the example of Klondike Gold Rush photographer A. E. Hegg, and documented the construction of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline with an 8-by-10-inch view camera. Over his career, he had one-person shows at the San Jose Museum of Art, the University of Oklahoma Museum of Art, the Alaska State Museum, the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry and Harper Hall at Claremont Graduate University.

After his diagnosis of ALS, he moved to Washington to be closer to family members. He lived for two years at the Washington State Veterans Home near Seattle and was also an intermittent patient at the Veterans' Administration hospital in Seattle.

Survivors include his mother, Edith Sonneman of Chicago; and sisters Eve Sonneman of New York, Toby Sonneman of Bellingham, Wash., and Milly Sonneman of Sausalito, Calif.

Burial will be at the Sitka National Cemetery with Jewish graveside services at a date yet to be determined. Arrangements are also pending for a Juneau memorial service.

Donations in Dr. Sonneman's memory may be made to the Joe Sonneman Prize In Photography Endowment c/o David Carpenter, Claremont Graduate University Advancement Office, 165 10th St., Claremont, CA 91711.●

### 2009 NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

• Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I would like to recognize the St. Catherine of Siena girls' varsity cheerleaders for being named the 2009 National Champions at the National High School Cheerleading Championship held in Orlando, FL, on February 8. I would like to take a few moments to congratulate them on their tireless efforts to bring their school and our State success.

The event was held at the Walt Disney World Resort and is produced by the Universal Cheerleaders Association. It is the most prestigious event for cheerleaders. Close to 8,000 of the Nations top cheerleaders from 400 teams in 33 States were invited to participate in the competition, including St. Catherine of Siena.

The St. Catherine squad is under the direction of Sandy Spitale and Debra L'Hoste and includes 22 students from the fifth, sixth, and seventh grades. Its members are Lauren Artigues, Ashley Barbier, Brooke Caldwell, Caroline Caldwell, Kaitlyn Coman, Elizabeth Cousins, Claire Crumb, Elise Delahoussaye, Rachel Douglass, Tiffany Forest, Callie Frey, Thia Le, Krista Liljeberg, Kelli Murphy, Allie Nicaud, Tessa Norris, Rachael Poissenot, Jessica Pottinger, Sophia Serpas, Kelsey Singletary, Kyla Szubinski, and Victoria Varisco. They were the only team from Louisiana to take home the title this year.