

to invade every last corner of our wonderful country in order to try to squeeze as much oil out of our domestic reserves as possible. That approach seems very short sighted to me. Clearly the heyday of cheap, readily available oil is over. Not only is oil bad for the environment, but it is not renewable. Our focus must be first on conservation. We should be focusing on increasing mass transit opportunities in Idaho and across the nation. We should also work on developing and rewarding businesses that are developing new, innovative green technologies such as electric cars. Secondly, we must be focusing on clean, renewable energy resources such as solar and wind power. But the major emphasis must be to limit the wastefulness that we have become accustomed to in this nation.

KRISTIN, *Boise*.

This has been a great concern to our family and we have wondered why there has not been more help from our government with this problem. If it were just the gas prices it might be something we could struggle through, but everything has increased in cost, much of which, I believe, is a direct result of the skyrocketing gas prices.

Our family is a blended family. We live in Rexburg, Idaho, but transfer children on two weekends to Logan, Utah, and on the other two weekends to Salt Lake City, Utah. At least this is what we are supposed to be doing. We were already spending around \$300-\$400 a month in gas before the prices jumped so high. We had to cut back our visits because we started going more and more in debt just to put gas in our car. It became a choice of securing our family relations and seeing some of our children or putting food on the table, maintaining a relationship with sons and daughters or keeping ourselves from going bankrupt. There are children we see sometimes less than once a month because of this. We cannot attend their school plays, their sports events, and have even missed their first dates and dances. There has been nothing we can do about it and it has been very emotionally painful for all of us. My last trip to Salt Lake cost \$177 in gas. It made me sick to have to spend that much just so I could see my daughter graduate, and as I sat at the pump watching the numbers climb, I knew I was just going farther into debt but I could not imagine missing that event.

Please, please keep trying to find an answer. We have fuel resources here. Why are not we using them? Yes, we need to protect the environment, but I do not think that will matter much to anyone if we cannot buy food or drive to work. I see articles all the time about cars that run on water or even air. Is this true? If it is, why are they not available to us? I believe there are answers and alternatives that do not require using our food crop to fill our cars. I do not know all the facts or have all the answers, but I do know that we cannot continue this way. It will not take long to become a bankrupt nation if we do not make some changes and fast. Thank you for trying to resolve this.

BEVERLY, *Rexburg*.

I have lived and worked as an auto mechanic in Boise for nearly 30 years. A couple of years ago I became ill and suffered some physical damage, which has forced a change in professions. I have taken some schooling and become an instructor of auto mechanics.

Finding a job as a new automotive teacher has been a challenge, as there are few opportunities scattered around the Treasure Valley. I now begin my second year of teaching

for the Canyon Owyhee School Service Agency, a consortium of five small rural school districts. I am required to travel among Parma, Notus, Wilder, Marsing, and Homedale High Schools. I am proud of the students I am training, and feel that I have found a worthy role to play in the lives of our youth. The catch is that I must drive about 120 miles per day. Because only one of these schools is equipped with an actual auto shop, I must carry with me substantial weight in tools, auto parts, training devices, and I have even towed cars from time to time.

My transition to teaching may seem like a logical move for a man in my physical situation, but it has cut my income considerably. I also carry the burden of residual medical bills and the cost of the continuing education required for my teaching credentials. I do receive a small mileage allowance, for miles driven within the district, but those are about half of the miles I drive. (Miles to and from my home in Boise are excluded.) Obviously, rising fuel and maintenance costs have substantially contributed to economic hardship as I struggle to rebuild some kind of a career. Fuel has risen in price more than eighty cents per gallon throughout this past school year, so I now must pay about \$14 each day, out of pocket, for my daily commute. I fear that between the real issues of an inadequate teaching salary and skyrocketing fuel costs, despite my efforts to remain a productive citizen, I will be forced out of my home, or even into unemployment lines.

KELLY, *Boise*.

My family and I have been affected in surprising ways by the increase in oil prices. We have always tried to be careful and conservative in our use of all of our country's resources and oil and gas are no exception. So it was a surprise to us that when our car's gas price went up above \$4 per gallon, we were suddenly more thoughtful about how and when we drive the car. We had thought we were as conservative as we could comfortably be with the amount we drove the cars, but it turns out that, overnight, we thought of many ways and times that we could leave the car in the garage and take the bus or ride a bike or even combine multiple trips into one weekly trip. It is only been a short time that the change has occurred and it has been in the summer time that offers many options. However, we are very pleased with the changes and are even considering getting rid of one of our cars as it they are both now sitting in the garage so much of the time.

I hope that this state and nation takes on the challenge of giving greater and greater incentives to alternative/renewable energy production and that we can work toward reducing greenhouse gases that this country is producing at such high rates. We are a country full of creative citizens and technological skills. I hope that we can start being a leader in this area rather than the most slow of followers. I know that this has not been your perspective but I hope that you can see the advantages to our citizens and growing technological community in supporting future climate change incentive and decentive bills.

ELIZABETH.

I now have a choice—medicine or gas; doctor appointment or gas; I cannot afford both, health or gas. Guess I could go on welfare and live off of the state. I drive ten miles to work, my husband drives 30 miles (both one way). We could move, but try to sell a house

in this economy. So the middle class is out of luck again. Please do something.

Jo.

Since the fuel price increases have become a part of my day-to-day concerns, I have observed a \$240 increase in my monthly spending in fuel for my vehicle. I only use my vehicle to go to work. I buy groceries within two miles of my work place, and that is the extent of my driving. My groceries are running about 40% higher, but I am sure that it something to do with using our tax dollars to subsidized the corn growers to build the ethanol plants what are of no significant value other than to help someone's friend make money and secure their job. But I digress; the subject is the fuel pricing and how it affects me. In the past, I would commute to Boise once a week and enjoy a dinner out because there are no restaurants in Mt Home that [I enjoy], but that, too, has past because of the fuel pricing. I am sure there are others in the same situation, and it must be hurting the restaurants and all other businesses in that area because we are dedicating our money to the rising fuel costs. Nevertheless, I will go on cutting my spending to accommodate the rising fuel costs until something better comes along. No! I will not get rid of my Ford F-150 because I am a tall person and require the leg and head room. I know that comes at a price but I would rather do that than to sacrifice the comfort.

STEPHEN, *Mountain Home AFB*.

TRIBUTE TO THE POLYNESIAN VOYAGING SOCIETY

Mr. INOUE. Mr. President, today I would like to recognize the Polynesian Voyaging Society. For more than a quarter century, members of the Polynesian Voyaging Society have dedicated much of their lives to voyages of exploration and discovery that have retraced every major migratory route of the ancient Polynesians. These voyages are not recreational but rather journeys that illustrate the scientific prowess of the Polynesian people and the strong connection between science and culture. Their commitment to the legacy of oceanic exploration seeks to integrate traditional voyaging into quality education. The Polynesian Voyaging Society has renewed interest in maritime exploration and reawakened Native Hawaiian pride in environmental awareness and ocean stewardship.

In today's age of modern technology, much can be learned from the past. Hawaii's past and future will always be intimately tied to the ocean for recreation, commerce, and transportation. The society exemplifies the importance of raising awareness of and protecting the unique treasures Hawaii's culture offers, and serves to enlighten a new generation of young people. Its members are truly a testament to Hawaii's oceanic heritage.

PROTECTION FROM CHILD PREDATORS

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, today I joined as a cosponsor of two

bills to protect children: S. 1738, the Combating Child Exploitation Act; and S. 519, the Securing Adolescents from Exploitation-Online—SAFE—Act.

I am cosponsoring S. 1738 to signal my support for this bipartisan effort to create a nationwide network of highly trained law enforcement experts to track down and prosecute child predators who exploit children, but it is my hope that Congress would enact the modified version of this legislation that was included in bills separately introduced by the majority leader—S. 3297—and Senator COBURN—S. 3344.

Unfortunately, both bills have been held up by partisan gridlock despite widespread support on both sides of the aisle. In fact, the House version of the SAFE Act—H.R. 3791—passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 409-2 in December 2007. That is why I believe that both bills H.R. 3791 and the modified version of S. 1738 could pass by unanimous consent if they were called up and passed together.

It is time to stop playing politics, bring these bills to the Senate floor and let the Senate approve them. Child exploitation is too important a problem to get caught up in partisan politics. I urge the majority leader to call up and pass these two bills without delay, and without either being attached to other legislation that could prevent them from becoming law.

I can't think of a more bipartisan step for the Senate to take this month than ending this impasse and passing these two worthwhile bills to protect children.

RED RIBBON WEEK

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my colleague, Senator MURKOWSKI, in cosponsoring a resolution commemorating Red Ribbon Week. Red Ribbon Week, observed October 23-31, encourages individuals, families, and communities to take a stand against alcohol, tobacco and illegal drug abuse. During this week, students all over the country pledge to live drug and alcohol free.

The tradition of Red Ribbon Week, now in its 23rd year of wearing and displaying red ribbons, started following the assassination of U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration Special Agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena. In an effort to honor his memory and unite in the battle against drug crime and abuse, friends, neighbors, and students from his home town of Calexico, CA, began wearing red ribbons. Shortly thereafter, the National Family Partnership took the celebration nationwide. Since then, the Red Ribbon campaign has reached millions of children, families, and communities across the country, spreading the message about the destructive effects of drugs.

In my State of Iowa, the theme for Red Ribbon Week is "Ask me, See me,

Be me . . . I'm Drug Free." Schools and community groups across the State are organizing a variety of activities including pledges, contests, workshops, rallies, theatrical and musical performances. These events are all designed to educate our children on the negative effects of drugs and to promote a drug-free environment.

Research tells us that the longer children stay drug-free, the less likely they will become addicted or even try illegal drugs. This is why it is so important to maintain a coherent anti-drug message that begins early in adolescence and continues throughout the growing years. Such an effort must involve parents, communities, and young people. Red Ribbon Week provides each of us the opportunity to take a stand by helping our children make the right decisions when it comes to drugs.

In light of the growing epidemic of prescription drug and cold medicine abuse throughout the Nation, this year's Red Ribbon Week holds greater importance. I hope my colleagues will join me in passing this resolution to demonstrate our commitment to raising awareness about drugs and encourage everyone to make healthy choices.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CONGRATULATING COASTAL WINDOWS, INC.

• Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the owners and employees of Coastal Windows, Inc., a family owned and operated business on Oahu and one of this year's recipients of the 2008 Freedom Awards presented by the Secretary of Defense and the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve.

Coastal Windows began their business in response to Hawaii's need for windows and doors that could endure the harsh environmental climate of the State's Sun, wind, rain, and salt air. They have been in operation for nearly 20 years and in that time have grown to an organization consisting of 62 employees. They are known for treating their employees as part of their "ohana" or family and are proud members of the community.

The manner in which they take care of their employees who also serve in our Nation's Armed Forces should inspire all of us here in Congress and across this Nation. Take for example their employee U.S. Army sergeant Mike Echiverri, who is about to be deployed for the third time as a member of the National Guard. During his absence, Coastal Windows maintains all his benefits, including health, dental, vision, and his retirement plans. He also continues to earn sick leave and vacation time, and he is given additional time off to spend with his family

before and after each deployment. Coastal Windows also often sends care packages to deployed employees and maintains regular communication via e-mail. The company also extends its support to family members of deployed employees by staying in constant contact with the family members and ensuring that spouses are invited to social events.

Coastal Windows became actively involved with the Department of Defense's Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, ESGR, program after its vice president, Bob Barrett, learned of the organization's efforts to promote cooperation and understanding between Reserve members and their civilian employers. Mr. Barrett became an ESGR employer outreach volunteer and works with ESGR Hawaii to educate employers about the benefits of hiring Guard and Reserve members. Coastal Windows also supports the military community by participating in activities like the Marine Corps' Toys for Tots program.

As 1 of only 15 companies nationwide to receive this honor, I congratulate Coastal Windows, and Mr. Bob Barrett in particular, for their dedication to their workers and for their selection as a Freedom Award recipient for 2008. They have set the standard in Hawaii as an example of how the community can take care of our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines and their families and make a direct contribution to the national security of the United States. I salute them for their outstanding service and wish them continued success in the years to come.●

REMEMBERING ROBERT J. MCCARTHY

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I take this opportunity to honor the memory of a dedicated attorney, community leader, and wonderful person, Robert "Bob" McCarthy. Bob passed away on September 4, 2004. He was 61 years old.

Born in New York City on December 31, 1946, Bob McCarthy spent his childhood in the city, where he attended Regis High School in Manhattan. Following his graduation in 1965, Bob attended Santa Clara University, where he was a Presidential honors scholar and editor-in-chief of the school newspaper. In 1969, Bob received a B.A. cum laude in political science in 1969. While attending the university, Bob met his future wife, Suzanne Bazzano, the office manager at the school newspaper. They married in 1970 and had five children.

Following a stint in Chicago, where he earned his law degree from the University of Chicago Law School, Bob and Suzanne moved to San Francisco, Suzanne's hometown. Bob pursued a career in law, working in the San Francisco office of the district attorney for 4 years, serving as chief deputy district