

Another area the FBI needs to improve is its implementation of information technology upgrades. For years, the FBI has been charged with the task of bringing its computer systems up to date. However, despite spurts of progress, this effort has been hobbled by embarrassment and setback.

The FBI had to scrap a \$170 million case management system called Virtual Case File in 2005. The Virtual Case File system was scrapped because it failed before it ever got rolling. VCF was poorly designed and poorly managed, and to make matters worse, the FBI placed little internal controls on the oversight of the project. To date, the FBI still has not completed a new version of the system, now known as Sentinel. Information technology needs to be a top priority for the FBI if it wants to effectively hunt down and disrupt terrorist cells around the globe. The situation could not be more urgent, and the FBI needs to step up and get the job done, on time and on budget.

It is also important to note that the FBI's budget has tripled since 1999. Last year, Congress appropriated almost \$7 billion dollars to the Bureau. We should not tolerate the FBI's continued mismanagement of public funds on programs that don't work. The American taxpayers can not afford another Virtual Case File.

Technological advances are important tools to keep up with dangerous terrorists and criminals. As terrorists and criminals use more advanced technology to evade detection, the FBI needs to stay ahead of them with new technologies to fight them without delays or setbacks. Americans are counting on a system that works to help prevent the next terrorist attack.

Congress plays an important oversight role over the FBI and other agencies. I take this role very seriously, as it is crucial to our system of checks and balances. At this 100-year juncture, I encourage the FBI to step up to the plate to make positive changes in its agency.

Congress also has a role to play in the future of the FBI. In the 107th and 108th Congresses, legislation was introduced to reform the FBI to protect whistleblowers and provide true accountability. Unfortunately, these reforms were never fully enacted into law. We should revisit these efforts to help the Bureau be the best it can be.

I also believe that Congress needs to continue to examine the FBI's counterterrorism mission and look at the calls some have made to split the FBI's law enforcement and domestic intelligence functions along the lines of the British MI-5. Now some may see my statement as a call to dismantle the FBI, that is not what I am saying. What I do believe is that our constitutional duty to conduct oversight includes a soup-to-nuts review of our law enforcement policies, including whether or not those at the FBI are achieving their primary mission. I think there is merit

to arguments on both sides and believe we should spend some of our time looking into this. To summarize, I thank FBI employees, past and present, for their collective past 100 years of service. I also challenge the FBI's management to grab ahold of the reins to build a stronger, more accountable, transparent, and effective FBI. I challenge the FBI's leadership to recognize and correct the problems it currently has so the Bureau can be the top notch law enforcement agency it can be.

Now is an ideal time for the agency to look back on what it has done right and wrong and work to do a lot better in the future.

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 that today's letters be printed in the RECORD.

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

I strongly urge you to fully and aggressively support legislation that extends the tax credits for renewable energy sources. This legislation has been defeated in Congress 3 times in the past year! This is unimaginable and pathetically short-sighted. Solar and wind power generation and the like generates hundreds of thousands of jobs and it is critical that companies expanding these industries be supported in their early stages.

BRIANT.

Thank you for asking! I am disabled and living on Social Security (\$784 per month). It is not a lot, but I had managed to live within my means for a short while and still have some kind of interaction with my church and family.

I will start my story from the time I became disabled and had to leave my employment with the Environmental Protection Agency in June of 1995. I became a full-time camper with my mother. We started out in her 19-foot class C camper and after my disability claim was approved 3 years later we moved "up" to a 29-foot fifth-wheel and a very used truck to tow it with. We took care of each other. We spent several summers hosting at Idaho State Parks for a free campsite (no salary) and one winter in Washington at Fort Canby. Most of our winters were spent in southern Texas at a large RV park where it was warm, the rent was reasonable and activities to keep us socially and

mentally engaged were plentiful. We made many friends on the road. There are/were many people living life as we were as it was all we/they could afford. Hanging out in the desert, bathing in an irrigation ditch, hauling our drinking water and driving 10 miles to "dump" our tank was fun at first. It was a life we could afford as long as the gas prices stayed down. We did not take many "side-trips." I do not know what the folks "on the road" will do now.

Finally, in 2001, I decided I wanted to have a real home again. A place to plant roots, real ones . . . roses and a vegetable garden as well as have a church family; someplace where I did not have to keep moving every few weeks or months; a real community that stayed put. In November of 2001 while visiting my sister in Spokane, I found a small "handy-man's nightmare" in Smelterville, Idaho that I could just afford if I sold the RV and truck. Mom was agreeable. The realtor said "you really do not want that house!" I said "yes, I do!" It had everything I wanted: a place to sit out front and greet the neighbors, an area for a garden and a clothesline to hang my laundry on; simple things.

Our whole world was falling apart at the time of the purchase as it was the week of September 11, 2001. In the silence of no aircraft flying overhead that week we prayed that our country would make it through this difficult and frightening time. We signed the papers, opened the windows and let the house air out for the winter. Mom and I headed south for our final warm, southern winter. I will never forget the sight of the huge American flags flying from the many rigs heading south. Do you know that most of the people living the "gypsy" life are very patriotic? Almost all of the men, and many of the women (myself included) are Veterans. I am reminded of the scene in the movie Independence Day where the RV's were all headed across the desert to Area 51.

We returned to Idaho in March to two feet of snow on the ground and no heat source in the house. We hired two guys (for \$20) who were waiting for the tavern to open to unload the U-haul before the next blizzard caught up with us. It had been chasing us since Denver. We had no furniture, just Rubbermaid tubs of dishes, pots and pans, clothes and craft stuff. (I slept on an air mattress on these tubs for the first year.) We stayed with my sister in Spokane while the weather settled. Fortunately the sun came out the next week so we sat out in the yard at a broken down picnic table in the sun a lot until it warmed up. We shoveled the debris (old carpeting and broken floor tiles) out of the house and a neighbor was kind enough to haul it to the dump. It was a year before we could walk on the floors barefoot. It took me that long with a small belt sander to redo them.

Over the next five years, I patched, painted, re-wired, constructed cabinets, closets and shelves, plumbed and eventually with the help of a USDA loan at 1 percent was able to have a foundation put under the house. I turned the ground in the backyard by hand with a shovel and planted my vegetable garden. I planted flowers. My cousin came up from California with her two foster children and helped me put in a gas fireplace that she had found in an abandoned mobile home, and an old picket fence. We tore out the sidewalk leading to the house and replaced it with stepping stones and an arch with pink roses. I hung my laundry out to dry on my beautiful clothesline. We celebrated my mother's 80th birthday in the backyard in the rain under a tarp. The next day my cousin and I started a real patio cover so we would not get so wet during the next celebration. None of this was fast or easy. I am disabled, remember? I sat in the sun and thanked God for His many blessings.