

Federal Reserve. The Federal Reserve is responsible for the Great Depression. They are responsible now for our inflation. Please take steps and ask Congress to remove this private agency and go to gold standard.

KEVIN, *Rathdrum.*

Fortunately, I can live, work, and shop within a 2-mile radius of home. However, we're reluctant to pull our RV down the road, which causes a loss of business for those tourist areas we would have visited.

I believe the best way to reduce gas prices is to increase production—drill off the coasts (like China and Cuba are doing now), and in Alaska; extract oil from coal and shale; and exploit other known resources. A massive effort to build nuclear plants would also be wise. It is time to tell the environmentalists where to “get off”. The planet is not getting warmer, and certainly not at the hands of man.

SCOTT.

SENATOR CRAPO, Thank you for your time and ears. I am married with three children at home (two girls, ages 15 and 16; and one boy, 10 years old). Ten years ago, my wife and I were receiving government assistance; now we are both college graduates and working in professional positions, yet we still feel the pain at the pump. I can only imagine how hard it is affecting those who are still on government assistance, or those less fortunate without a higher education. I have personally bought relatives gas in the last month, not because they asked but because I knew they needed it.

Our family has felt the crunch with rising fuel prices. Fuel costs have taken away money from other pertinent bills in our household, especially our energy/power bill. Our family has scaled back traveling and fun family activities such as going to Mariners baseball games. After all, baseball is as American as apple pie. I know these aren't priorities in most households, but activities like these are ones which my family enjoys our time together. When you are raising teenagers you really appreciate these times because teens are hard to convince that family time is truly important. My wife and I bought two small import vehicles (4-cylinders) because we saw this fuel crisis coming. Maybe there could be incentives for using energy-efficient vehicles, not specifically imports but fuel-efficient vehicles. We have a large SUV, but we only drive it when we travel or have to transport the entire family.

Please help contain the ever-rising fuel crisis. Families are affected in more ways than we can imagine, especially the poor.

Sincerely,

RICHARD, *Lenore.*

You asked for my story here it is.

As a retired person and gas prices so high, I do not go anywhere. What bothers me more is the profit taking by oil companies, record profit earning 300 percent and over. Now is the time to own stock in oil. Is this not just greed, ripping off of the American public? We have back-up supplies; we have other sources of energy. We have a government that is not doing its job of protecting the people from being taken advantage of. Why are our government officials allowing this to happen? OPEC does control a lot but are they not beholden to us for some of our products? Can we not hold them over the barrel—for some of the product we send them? OK, a head of lettuce \$4.00 each? What is happening with this country? All I am seeing is greed.

We have oil in Alaska; we have oil in Texas. Drill more here; supply ourselves. Why are we shipping oil out? Why not keep

our oil here so that OPEC can't hold us up at the bank?

Sincerely,

CLAUDIA, *Nampa.*

DEAR SENATOR CRAPO, I am very pleased for the opportunity to say something that will be heard. I bought a nice little 3-bedroom house in Caldwell, thinking the drive would be long, but something I could handle because I have a car that gets decent gas mileage. Well, with the high gas prices, I have left my home in Caldwell and moved to Boise to be able to keep my job and have something left to live on. Of course with the housing market, it is not selling. I know a lot of people like me who are sharing homes with others due to the increase in gas, electricity, and food prices. Right now living in Boise, it is still costing me 150.00 a month for gas, and I live about 15 minutes from work. Living in Caldwell it was three times the amount. That is one whole paycheck for me. I learned to eat noodles and potatoes instead of other things that would be better for me to eat. Can you imagine the people who are living on that who do not have a good job? I go to work, home and church. Now you may think that is not much of a life. I used to go for drives and visit friends, but that is not possible at this time due to the high cost of everything. We in this country know how to cut back and buckle down to do what needs to be done to help, but our government has let things get way out of hand. We as the voting public are supposed to have a say in things and too many have sat back and said nothing. Something must be done. We have far too long been dependent on others for our fuel, when we have the resources right here in this great country. I do not mean to sound negative, but there is nothing left for us to give. It is time those who have been elected begin giving back to those who support them!

I pray someone is listening.

JEANNIE, *Boise.*

The amount of fuel that I use is as minimal as I can get. I do not do anything except drive back and forth to work and to the grocery store on weekends. I do very little, if any, extra driving. I would love to go camping or up in our wonderful mountains to go fishing, but I cannot afford the gas that it would take to do this. I have been trying to find a way to purchase a different automobile that would get better mileage, but if you do not have extra money, it is real hard to try to save. I use one tank of gas a month to do what I do and, at today's price, that costs me \$120.00; soon it will be \$150.00; then who knows. I understand price increases, but this is ridiculous. We need to have relief now. I do not understand how one group of people can put all of our own oil in such problems by not allowing us to drill for our own gas and oil. This problem stems from green people who have no idea how anyone else lives. We do not now nor will we ever have mass transit that will remove our cars from the highway.

I feel that we need to drill and produce our own oil and gas as much as we can; then we can tell all of these countries that do not like us goodbye, and we can keep our money here to help people in the U.S. that need help.

Thank you very much for the space to vent. I am not sure it will come of anything, but we can hope.

God bless the USA.

RICK.

With fuel prices increasing so rapidly, we aren't travelling as much or planning a vacation. We are making cutbacks in many areas. However, I was recently visiting my parents

in Idaho Falls. They are retired and on a limited income, so I have worried a bit about their finances with the rising fuel prices that not only affect transportation but everything. We stopped at a grocery store known to have the lowest prices consistently. As I approached the check out I saw a family and the mom's voice was starting to rise in intensity and volume. She was under a lot of stress. Her children were near and her husband was, too. She was adding up the cost of the meager amount of groceries in their cart and starting to put back basic items. The children and husband looked at her. She said, “I only have a half tank of gas left. I only have a half tank of gas left,” she repeated. “I just filled it up and I only have ½ tank left.” She turned to her husband and asked him if he had driven her car yesterday. He replied, “No.” Tears came to my eyes as I realized what this young, small, responsible family was going through. Tension was mounting, money was very tight, without fuel, how would they get to work? With fuel costing at least double what it recently was, how would they have enough to stretch? I hadn't realized that people were already having to make choices between fuel and food. Many, many Idahoans are independent and hard-working. They do not look for government hand-outs. They are resourceful. They grow gardens, glean fields nearby, cook from scratch and stretch their dollars in many ways. They make things work. But there comes a point when dollars do not stretch farther, salaries aren't increasing as rapidly as expenses, second jobs are scarcer to find. I live in Boise, a city with more transportation options. We are biking more; my husband has the privilege of biking to work. This family did not! Rural areas have few transportation options besides personal vehicles, and the distance to almost anywhere is great.

I believe as we use and develop our own resources in our great country that people will rise to the occasion and find solutions before we run out of fuel. When we encourage personal initiative and do not take a dependency attitude we, the people, can accomplish amazing things.

KARLA, *Boise.*

We must start drilling for domestic oil, start making nuclear power plants and oil refineries. I will not support anyone who does not and will be willing to help support those leaders who do.

JOHN.

My story is not special, but I think it is too common. I am a 55-year-old woman. I am my sole support. I live in Emmett, but there are no jobs there. I work in Boise, a 30-mile drive one way. I do not make a lot of money and, with the mortgage industry the way it is, I cannot afford to move. Homes are not selling in Emmett. I wonder how much higher things are going to go. Soon it will be a choice of food or gas. Which would you choose?

I am disgusted with our government. They do nothing, and I know they do not have to suffer the way we do. I feel our government has forgotten they work for us, not that we are supporting them.

CANDACE, *Emmett.*

DEAR SENATOR CRAPO, I am lucky enough to live within three miles of where I work, so transporting myself has not impacted me as much as most in my community. Where I am hit hard, though, is the cost of the organic and healthy food I buy. Since spending a lot of time trying to get myself healthy and researching about pesticides and about environmental toxins, I had to make the decision to vote with my dollars. I have spent a