

the United States, having fought some of country's greatest civil rights battles.

Since its inception, the NAACP has been on the frontlines fighting for racial equality in all areas of life. A team of NAACP lawyers, led by Thurgood Marshall, fought successfully for the desegregation of public schools in the landmark case *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954. The NAACP also played a key role in ensuring the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act, laws that are essential to guaranteeing all Americans' full participation in our democracy.

Whether it is combating racial profiling, reauthorizing the Voting Rights Act, or fighting hate crimes and pay discrimination, I have been proud to stand side by side with the NAACP throughout my Senate career.

There is no better way to honor the NAACP's work than to continue its fight for justice and equal opportunity. This fight starts with getting the Nation's economy moving again, and giving every child access to quality education and every family access to affordable health care. I look forward to working with the NAACP and with all my Senate colleagues to make these goals a reality.

FILLING GUN LAW GAPS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, while Congress frequently considers important matters, not every day does it pass legislation capable of actually saving lives. The Brady bill, however, signed into law November 30, 1993, has proven to be such a piece of legislation. The Brady law requires that a prospective gun purchaser undergo a criminal background check before obtaining any firearm from a Federal firearm licensee. Created to prevent felons, fugitives, domestic abusers and other prohibited persons from access to guns, the Brady law has been an important tool in the fight to keep our families and communities safe.

According to the Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence, Brady background checks have blocked more than 1.6 million attempts by high-risk people to buy a gun from licensed dealers through the end of 2007, including an estimated 842,000 convicted felons, 236,000 people convicted of domestic abuse and 68,000 fugitives from justice. Also, during this 15-year period, the total number of robberies and aggravated assaults committed with a firearm decreased from 564,648 in 1993 to 377,331 in 2006, a decrease of 33 percent. The number of murders committed with a firearm also declined 32 percent, from 17,048 in 1993 to 11,566 in 2006.

Despite these significant reductions in crime, much more needs to be done. Brady background checks, for example, are currently only required for purchases from a licensed gun dealer, which only account for approximately 60 percent of gun sales. They are not required for sales between unlicensed

persons, such as sales at gun shows. According to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, almost one-third of all trafficked guns are acquired at gun shows and flea markets. These types of settings provide the perfect loophole for unlicensed sellers to offer countless guns for sale with no questions asked. Someone that would not be able to pass a background check in a licensed gun store currently is able to purchase as many guns as they want at gun shows.

As we begin the first session of the 111th Congress, it is my hope that we will take this opportunity to build upon the success of this law. I urge my colleagues to pass sensible gun safety legislation that will fill the gaps in our gun laws.

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 well over 1,200, are heartbreaking and touching. While energy prices have dropped in recent weeks, the concerns expressed remain very relevant. To respect the efforts of those who took the opportunity to share their thoughts, I am submitting every e-mail sent to me through an address set up specifically for this purpose 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 to have today's letters printed in the RECORD.

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

First I do not know why I am writing this since I doubt that the Senate will really hear me, but since you gave me the opportunity to vent here goes.

My husband and I have been married for nine years. Our goal has always been to live within our means. He is an electrician and makes a decent wage and has good health benefits. I am a stay-at-home mom and am busy taking care of our three children (soon four). We have tried to stay out of debt our whole marriage. We currently have our house payment which takes up 27% of my husband's take-home pay each month (This can be lowered if he works overtime but for this sake it is just working a 40-hour week). We then have life insurance policies that are cash policies that take up 08% of our income. We contribute 10% to our faith each month. Then there is 11% used for utility bills, car insurance, etc. The rest is used for gasoline, food, clothing, and unexpected expenses. Last year we were saving 12.5% of my husband's income monthly. This year we are barely making it monthly and saving only 3% if possible.

We can foresee that if energy prices continue it will be hard for my husband to keep

working as an electrician. Pay has not increased as well as costs and living where we do in Idaho we cannot stay in the same town to work. Last year he was traveling over 120 miles a day to go to work and home. It is not unusual for electricians in Idaho to travel at least 60 miles one way. We have tried to accommodate his traveling and moved to the middle of where he has worked but still we figured it costs him 400 dollars a month in gasoline to go to work which is 11% of his income. It is easy to see why we are barely making it.

We are frugal citizens. I do the cooking of food, we pack lunches from home, we have no cable television or cell phones, we grow our own garden, I can our own fruit and vegetables, my husband hunts for venison in the fall which we package ourselves (being the majority of our meat source), and we try to stock up monthly on our food storage. I have been doing less storage because we have less income. I also as the primary shopper have noticed that our food is costing more to purchase.

The problem is not that gasoline is just high. Because it is high food prices are higher, parts for vehicles are higher (we do the majority of our vehicle repairs too), electricity and utilities have raised, taxes are raised to pay for the increase in cities budgets, etc. The 11% we are seeing in gas does not compensate for all the increases because of gas. If we take that into account we would probably see that number grow exponentially.

So we see what gas is doing, what are we doing about it? 1) As a family we are trying to start a business that we can do on the side from home. We sent my husband to Taxidermy School so he can maybe earn a little on the side along with being an electrician. This has been very difficult to do since it costs money and we have very little extra to spend. It has taken us a year to pay for the supplies and tools that are needed. We have spent our savings hoping that in the future it will work out. 2) We make sure he carpools with coworkers so our gas bill is minimal. This so far has been great but we cannot always count on it working out as smoothly as it has. 3) We do not travel; I go out very little and drive only about 50 miles a week. The rest of the time I am home with our kids. On the weekends we stay home and try to entertain ourselves in our yard. We have planted a larger garden to hopefully help us keep out of the grocery store less. We try to stay active as a family. We no longer for fishing, hiking, camping, or geocaching as a family. It is too expensive to go. I have not enrolled our children in anything extra such as soccer, tee ball, swim lessons, etc. because the money is not there to accommodate such wants. With such cuts we are still able to barely make it.

The time has come for people to be extremely frugal, work more than one job, or go into extreme debt to make ends meet. We once were a nation to progress, to succeed, to set the standards . . . are we now becoming a nation in steady decline? How do we reverse such a movement? Will our government written by the people and for the people help us or hinder us? Let us start the upward movement before the decline is too hard for many of our citizens to climb out of. Curbing the costs of gasoline and educating the public on financial security will help many get out of the holes they have dug themselves into, and help others from digging any holes at all. Thanks.

SESHA, Shelley.

Thank you for caring enough to listen to the folk in Idaho. Why does it matter how we feel or what we think? Nothing will change for the working man.

Idaho Power will continue to raise our energy bills. Gas is rising each day and now food, then gas heat, etc. It is a domino effect. Why does nothing ever go down? Taxpayers keep getting hit time and again for everything, including illegal immigrants. Get them back home to where they came from that would save a bunch of money right there, in gas, food, welfare, and money paying their medical hospital/ER bills, etc. Have you seen the new laws of Ada County, having to cover illegal immigrants and their medical problems? I can barely take care of my own anymore.

I wish I earned hundreds of thousands like [so many people who make policy decisions. Perhaps more need to know that it's like to] hope you have enough money after buying food for your family and prescriptions for your child for gas for your car—no more fun vacations that we remember as children for my kids; instead, I am doing all I can to keep myself and my family above water and working for benefits.

Why should we be proud to be Americans anymore? Our government gives and gives to other countries, and sends our men and women to a senseless waste of time war—costing billions, and what do we all get in return? The vets come home with hardly any thanks, and we Americans get [the short end] one way or another, by money, tax and politics, and the system in general.

UNSIGNED.

Thank you for standing up for the working class who are being profoundly affected by the rising gasoline and energy costs. The rising cost of gasoline is affecting the cost of food and commodities as well. It is getting more difficult all the time to make ends meet. My husband and I are in our 60s and have turned to riding scooters to be able to afford the gasoline which has gone from costing \$200 per month to over \$450 per month just to be able to get to work! We definitely need to increase our domestic oil production, provide refineries to process it. We must remember that the oil is a finite resource and therefore we must expand nuclear energy research and develop incentives for conservation. We need to fix some very serious problems in our country. We have major health care issues—insurance companies getting rich and employers having to reduce benefits and all of it basically comes right out of our pockets. We have hungry people in our own country and we should be taking care of business at home, work on becoming much more self sufficient in providing our own energy resources and fix the problems to give Americans back a life that is affordable.

SHERRY, *Meridian*.

I am 27 years old, married with no children, and working the hard grind like everyone else. I am currently enrolled at BSU working diligently towards a doctorate degree in chiropractics.

While attending BSU, I was able to take an English class that was focused around the environment and problems that have recently arisen. One of the assignments that we were given was to think of a particular crisis that we as humans are facing and come up with a reasonable solution. The topic that I choose to write on was alternate fuels sources. After much research I found that one of the easiest and most abundant fuel sources we have is hydrogen (H).

I understand that you set up this email to hear from the people of Idaho with concerns, ideas or whatever to come up with a solution to the current crisis we are in, and everything that I have noticed is everyone is worried just about the cost of fuel. Inflation is a real thing, and it was coming sooner or later . . . but why do we have to focus on using old

technology? Why can we not focus on using alternate fuels in Idaho? I am an Idaho native, and I personally believe this is the greatest state to live in because of the quality of life this great state provides. The problem is we are destroying that quality by still utilizing fossil fuels.

I recently went to the movies with my wife and saw an inspiring short film about the town of Greensburg, Kansas. If you are not familiar with the phenomenon that is occurring in this town I will briefly describe it. Recently this town of Greensburg was devastated by numerous tornadoes to the point of there were no sound structures still standing . . . instead of the people of the community just giving up and moving, they decided to rebuild the city but to rebuild it as the "greenest" city on earth. They made a commitment to not only better the environment, but also the community and the quality of life. This short story struck a chord with me . . . why combat the prices of fuel? Why not combat the harmful fuel itself? Through the basic laws of physics we know that mass cannot be destroyed, just changed. Hydrogen (H) is the simplest form of a molecule known to man, and once combusted with Oxygen it creates water. I know you are a very educated man and probably do not need physics or chemistry lessons but I do have a point. Being our Senator and our voice, and acknowledging the crisis we are in I applaud you for your ongoing efforts, but I personally think we should not only focus our efforts to help alleviate the hardships on Idahoans but make the quality of life better. Become the first State in this great nation to do something different, make a difference, and show the rest of the nation what Idahoans are all about.

Fuel will always be needed, but why limit what fuel that is? We have a chance to make a difference, become leaders and not followers. Set a trend that will improve our economic standings, make miracles happen and change the world. I understand that you are one among a very powerful group of people . . . but you have the state of Idaho behind you to make a difference. The only thing I ask is for you to enlist into a righteous cause and make a difference that the world can see and will follow.

Thank you for your efforts and your time in reading this; it is my pleasure to have a representative who cares in office.

MIKE.

I did not receive your email request because I am not a registered Republican. However, whether Republican or Democrat, we are all suffering the same crisis with the rising fuel costs.

I will not go into the politics of this because I just do not understand how big oil business can control the whole world like this.

What I do know is this: I moved my daughter out to Meridian a few years ago so I could be more help raising her three children. She is a single mother who is not receiving child support, but makes too much money for state help. We both work in Boise. She keeps her children involved in sports to help keep them out of trouble. Now she has to decide—drive to work, drive the kids to sports, or buy groceries. My other daughter (she and I are both single also) and I help buy groceries, help her with expenses, and help drive the kids to sports events. Now we are all suffering.

My daughter (with the children) received a 2% raise this year, but her power just went up 10%, gas has gone up 100%, and her medical insurance deduction from her check went up 20%. It has reached the point where we are all selling our homes and moving into one to help with expenses. The days of mul-

tiplex generation homes has come back. I really do not know how the elderly on limited incomes are surviving.

Thanks for listening, and I hope answers will be coming very soon. This just has to stop.

ARDEN, *Meridian*.

I just wanted to share that we are one of many grandparents that are raising a grandchild. I have chosen to stay at home to raise her so we are now a one-income family. My husband works in Boise, and we live in Middleton. It is costing us over \$200 a month for gas for him to go to work. Our granddaughter's father is in a work camp in St. Anthony and every year we take her to see him. She lives for that visit, but this year we had to break the news to her that we could not afford to make this trip. She was broken-hearted. But if the cost of fuel keeps going up, we may have to also break the bad news to her that she will not be able to continue with her dance classes. She has been taking ballet for 7 years, but we will have to make the choice of food and gas over her dancing. I have also been able to help at her school during the day, but again this year that may not happen. If the gas prices do not go down and the state raises the price on registrations I will have no option but to park my car and not use it at all. My husband always goes to a church mission every year to help the poor and needy with house repairs, but not this year, as they have to supply their own gas back and forth.

We are at the point with gas prices and food prices and utilities and property taxes going up and wages staying the same we do not have anything left at the end of each pay period. There is no fun time for us now, no vacations, eating out, or going to a movie. We are saving our dimes this year to just go to the fair, which our little girl looks forward to also. I pray I do not have to say no to her again.

I also have a father who lives here in Middleton; he is 84 years old and has cancer and has to drive everyday to Boise for treatments. He has not complained but I am sure being on a fixed income he is giving something up to get that gas to receive his radiation. Please help all of us people. I know there are people who are worst off than we. This is just not fair or just.

DIANA.

My story is as follows: I am a (divorced) single parent of three. I work fulltime and am buying my home. I receive a small amount of child support along with my salary. It has become nearly impossible to be able to afford to just drive to work and back. Taking my children anywhere for a summer vacation has become an impossibility this year. It has already reached the point that I have to choose between gas and anything else (including running my air conditioner in my home or car). If the cost of fuel keeps rising, I will definitely have to mortgage my house just to get through the remainder of the year. It is not right! We are living hand to mouth, and the United States has resources we should be utilizing. Even if the oil off-shore will not immediately alleviate the cost of fuel, we need to start drilling in order to stabilize our economy. In the mean time, the "negotiators" who buy the oil from other countries could cut back their bonuses and cut our costs drastically.

JEANNA, *Boise*.

How much energy can the sun provide? According to the American Solar Energy Society, enough sunlight falls on the earth's surface each minute to meet world energy demand for an entire year. <http://www.powerhousetv.com/>.

The above info blows me away. Why aren't we harnessing this energy?

I live in an older home with an oil furnace. We use it conservatively, turn it off during the day, down when we go to sleep for the night, use a couple of space heaters—and still my oil bill is pushing \$400 a month. . . . And winter went long this year.

We already have the technology to utilize solar energy, whereas cellulosic, or any viable, biofuel is years away. Why do not we put tax dollars into constructing power plants that will capture solar energy and give meaningful assistance to people to convert from oil-consuming applications?

CAROL, *Twin Falls.*

This letter is written with intent to describe our ever-diminishing economy from a manufacturer's point of view. FAB TEC, Inc is a small business that manufactures aggregate handling equipment, including; rock crushers, screening plants and material conveying products. We employ approximately 50 people. Our industry uses primarily steel. From raw stock steel products, to axles with wheels and tires and all the necessary hardware to complete this equipment.

Over the past two and a half years our company has endured huge price increases in our consumables needed to produce our products. Such as steel, and petroleum based products along with all other consumables needed to manufacture our product.

Steel prices have soared approximately 300% over the last three years. 50% increase since December of 2007 pricing. Fuel prices have also gone out of control. FAB TEC uses many petroleum based products such as large amounts of conveyor belting, tires and paint products. Not to mention the fuel it takes to bring in and ship out our products. The manufacturer, and also the end user of products like ours are absorbing huge costs due to the out of control pricing of the consumables we use in the production of the product we sell.

With the public's whispered word "recession" at hand, we think it is time our government steps in to control the price gouging large corporations have forced on all of us, especially including the individual standing in line at the grocery store to buy his bare necessities to survive the ever increasing cost due to out of control fuel costs. I would hope someone or entity would do something soon before it is too late.

These statements are solely based on my opinion, but I feel as many do, we must do something now before it is too late to reverse our dwindling economy.

FRANK, *Moscow.*

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO MAYOR KATHLEEN NOVAK

• Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, I am joined by my distinguished colleague, Mr. BENNET from Colorado.

Next week, several thousand city and town leaders from across the country will visit us in Washington, DC, to discuss the major issues of the day. They will be gathered under the auspices of the National League of Cities, NLC, whose president is one of our distinguished mayors—Northglenn, CO, Mayor Kathleen Novak.

Senator BENNET and I will have the honor of meeting with Mayor Novak and a group of other Colorado municipal leaders working through NLC and the Colorado Municipal League.

I want to take this opportunity to recognize Mayor Kathleen Novak. Mayor Novak was elected to Northglenn's City Council on July 11, 1991, after years of serving the community. She was elected mayor in November 2001 and then reelected in November 2005, serving two 4-year terms.

It was Mayor Novak's interest in planning for the city's future that led the city council to develop goals and adopt a strategic plan to help guide the city into the future. Each year, the Northglenn City Council identifies critical issues that can impact and shape Northglenn's future and develops an action agenda to prioritize and address these pressing issues. This has allowed the city to make tremendous progress on many fronts throughout the mayor's term in elected office.

Over the years, Novak helped continue to provide the top-notch services that residents have grown to appreciate while balancing the community's transportation and infrastructure needs through upgrades to the city's infrastructure and facilities. While Mayor Novak was in office, Northglenn built a new wastewater treatment facility and a new maintenance and operations facility and self-funded the 112th Avenue Overpass to make traveling from east to west easier for the city's residents. Northglenn was the first city in Colorado to promote water conservation efforts such as instituting a lottery system whereby city residents could secure free high-efficiency water features for their homes. Through these efforts, the city expects to save 20-25 acre-feet of water annually and thereby save the city and its citizens money from the conserved water.

Northglenn also applies biosolids from water treatment to fertilize farms in Weld County. Through such applications, the city grew, harvested, and sold 2,500 tons of crops. Since recycling conserves precious natural resources, over the past 9 years, the city has been heating two shop buildings with used motor oil that residents have placed at the curb for recycling.

In 2008, Mayor Novak's interest in reconnecting government to all age groups led the city to be the first in the State to be named a Playful City USA by KABOOM, as unique offerings of play continued to take shape in Northglenn. Early in Novak's tenure, Northglenn received America's Crown Community Award by American City and County Magazine for the rehabilitation and redesign of Webster Lake and E.B. Rains Jr. Memorial Park. The park included an innovative concept of providing unique opportunities of play for all—Northglenn's Sensory Playground. The playground offers children with a range of disabilities the opportunity to experience play and exceeds the Americans with Disabilities Act requirement of 50 percent accessibility by providing nearly 100 percent accessibility for people who use wheelchairs.

Most recently, the renovation of the Croke Reservoir Nature Area earned

the city the 2009 Colorado American Public Works Association Award for Engineering and Construction Management for medium-sized communities. The project included stabilization of the eastern shoreline, removal of sediment to improve fishery and wildlife habitat, and improvements to stormwater detention in the area.

Throughout her service, Mayor Kathleen Novak has worked hard to ensure that the city of Northglenn maintains its high quality of life. Last December, in recognition of her efforts, Mayor Novak was unanimously elected by her national peers to serve as the president of the National League of Cities, the voice of municipal government in this country. Senator BENNET and I thank Mayor Novak for her leadership and dedication to Northglenn, CO, and to the Nation.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Thomas, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-834. A communication from the Chief of Regulations and Administrative Law, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Drawbridges (including 3 regulations beginning with USCG-2007-0172)" (RIN1625-AA09) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 26, 2009; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-835. A communication from the Chief of Regulations and Administrative Law, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Security Zones (including 27 regulations beginning with USCG-2007-0083)" (RIN1625-AA87) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 26, 2009; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-836. A communication from the Chief of Regulations and Administrative Law, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Regulated Navigation Areas (including 2 regulations beginning with USCG-2008-0468)" (RIN1625-AA09) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 26, 2009; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-837. A communication from the Chief of Regulations and Administrative Law, U.S.