

imposes any taxation on any United States persons.

AMENDMENT NO. 638

(Purpose: To strike a provision relating to Federal Trade Commission authority over home mortgages)

Strike section 626 of title VI, of Division D.

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

● Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, I wish to offer for the record the Budget Committee's official scoring of H.R. 1105, the Omnibus Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2009.

The bill, as passed by the House, provides \$407.6 billion in nonemergency discretionary budget authority, BA, for fiscal year 2009, which will result in new outlays of \$244.5 billion. When outlays from prior-year budget authority are taken into account, discretionary outlays for the bill will total \$468.1 billion.

The bill also includes \$100 million in emergency discretionary BA for 2009 resulting in \$85 million in new outlays for the Secret Service.

When the nonemergency funding in H.R. 1105 is combined with the funding included in H.R. 2638, the Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance, and Continuing Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2009, the overall level equals the Appropriations Committee's 302(a) allocation for budget authority and is \$2.5 billion below the committee's allocation for outlays.

Each appropriations subcommittee included in H.R. 1105 is at its respective 302(b) suballocation for budget authority and outlays.

The bill would cause the 2009 budget resolution spending aggregates to be exceeded and would therefore be subject to a point of order under Section 311(a)(2)(A) of the Congressional Budget Act. In addition, several provisions in the bill make changes in mandatory programs—CHIMPs—that are subject to a point of order under section 314 of S. Con. Res. 70, the concurrent budget resolution for fiscal year 2009. Finally, the bill includes an emergency designation pursuant to section 204 of S. Con. Res. 21, the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2008. No other points of order lie against the bill as passed by the House.

I ask unanimous consent that the table displaying the Budget Committee scoring of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

HR. 1105, Omnibus Appropriations Act, 2009

[Spending comparisons—House Passed Bill (in millions of dollars)]

	<i>Total Funding</i>
House-Passed Bill:	
Budget Authority	407,602
Outlays	468,067
Previously-enacted:	
Budget Authority	605,084
Outlays	636,433
Total:	
Budget Authority	1,012,686

Outlays	<i>Total Funding</i> 1,104,500
Senate 302(a) allocation:	
Budget Authority	1,012,686
Outlays	1,107,004
House-Passed Bill Compared To:	
Senate 302(a) allocation:	
Budget Authority	0
Outlays	-2,504

Note: The bill also includes \$100 million in emergency funding for the Secret Service.●

Mr. REID. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WARNER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. WARNER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HONORING JASON MATTHEWS

Ms. LANDRIEU. Madam President, I wish to pay tribute to a young man who worked for me for many years—actually, for 12 years. He has been a very vital part of the Landrieu staff. He is retired. He left our office after 12 years of wonderful service.

Jason Matthews started out with me as an assistant in my first campaign for the Senate as literally a young kid right out of college. He worked his way up. He had no real political connections other than just a passion for the work, a heart for people, and a good mind. He came to Washington with me 12 years ago and started out, maybe even answering the phones some days, and worked his way up as military LA and then as legislative director and then general counsel and then left our office with the title chief of staff.

Besides serving with such great humor and a great mind for policy and, as I said, a great heart for people, he served with great cheer through very difficult times that our office and many of my colleagues from Louisiana have been through considering the storms of the past recent years and the extra work our staffs have had to go through because of them. Jason led that effort with good humor. Because of him, many wonderful accomplishments in our office have been achieved. One I will mention, and I will share the rest for the record, is Louisiana's long-standing effort to achieve some balance and fairness in the distribution of oil and gas royalties and revenues which interior States have enjoyed since 1927 and coastal States have not because of the peculiarity in the law.

Jason helped us fight a 10-year battle and finally was successful.

The people of all of Louisiana will be grateful for many years for his service. He has led the people of Louisiana to great achievements. He has served the people of our country well. I wanted to pay tribute to him today and to wish him the best as he goes on to future endeavors here in the Washington, DC, area.

TROUBLED ASSET RELIEF PROGRAM OVERSIGHT ENHANCEMENT ACT

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, to date, over 380 companies have received some \$300 billion taxpayer dollars from the Troubled Asset Relief Program, supposedly to improve their financial stability. These include some of the largest corporations and financial institutions in America.

Yet in recent years, many of these same firms found enough money to contribute annually to some of the most radical organizations in the nation.

They have donated large sums to ACORN, Friends of the Earth, Planned Parenthood, the Natural Resources Defense Council, and Conservation International Foundation, to name just a few. The vast majority of Americans do not support the agendas of these fringe groups, whose excesses have been well-documented over the years.

Companies that get bailed out cannot carry on as if it were business as usual. They should not grab for taxpayer dollars help with one hand and give money to these radical organizations with the other.

That is why I have introduced the Troubled Asset Relief Program Oversight Enhancement Act.

This legislation would let us see how these companies are spending their money. If they are not focused on increasing their solvency or liquidity, if they are not working on lending to small businesses and individuals, if they are not helping get this economy back on track, and are instead financing extremist organizations, then the American people need to know about it.

“Transparency” is one of the new watchwords in Washington. Let's have some of that transparency for the sake of the American taxpayers, who deserve to see how these companies are behaving after receiving hard-earned tax dollars.

IDAHOANS SPEAK OUT ON HIGH ENERGY PRICES

Mr. CRAPO. Madam 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 heart-breaking 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:

I run a small 1-man truck brokerage business. The fuel prices are all but driving my company out of business. The quotes I receive from truckers leave little to no room for me to make a living. I have been in the transportation business for over twenty years and this is the first time I feel I will have close my company. Any assistance that can be offered to help lower fuel prices would be greatly appreciated. Also, health care needs a serious reform. For the first time in my adult life, my insurance premiums exceed my home mortgage payment. If all this keeps up, I will be forced to choose between my home and my insurance. My vote this next election depends on who is willing to actually help with these issues. Something must change soon or millions of Americans will be in financial trouble.

RANDY.

We need to let technology repair this gas war. It has been said that necessity is the mother of invention. We need to loosen up on new oil well drilling and other forms of energy. The communities that have the wind turbines and oil wells should have cheaper power and fuel. It really eats at Idahoans in Idaho Falls to have wind turbines in our yards and not reap the benefits. We need a few nuclear reactors making energy and ethanol. We need to remove fields from CRP and give farmers incentives to plant. We need technology to invent better engines that use higher blends of ethanol and less oil-based fuels. In the meantime, record numbers of Americans are going to go broke. I personally have cut back my driving by half.

TODD, Idaho Falls.

The president needs to overturn the executive order not to develop natural energy resources. [Conservatives] need to be hollering to anyone who will listen that we need oil, natural gas, coal production and nuclear power plants. Americans are not against alternative energy, but let us develop it before we shut off the oil spigot. The Green movement is whispering in the ears of the [liberals] and they have no choice but to be against developing our petroleum resources. Believe me, [liberals] drive as much as I do and are as mad. Help us go forward. There needs to be leadership in D.C., let [liberals] keep saying no to oil, they will cut their own throat. If nothing is done, 1861 is around the corner. T

WADE.

Thank you for working hard for us in Idaho. I am a 64 year old man, disabled and on SSA. I have a wife and a 14-year-old son. I live 50 miles from the nearest place where I can shop for food and supplies. I use to go to town once a month. Now I have to try to

make my supplies last me a lot longer. Since the price of gas has gone so high, I have a lot less money to buy food after I fill my truck with gas. I go nowhere else except to the doctor.

Congress talks about everyone conserving and using less, but how much less do you intend for us to conserve. We could go back to the 18th century and become a Third World country, but that seems a little bleak, does not it! I do not understand why our Congressmen are working so hard to make it a reality.

Congress also tells us to use alternative sources of energy, but there are no sources available, affordable, or viable. Congress is making laws to force us to use energy sources that have not been invented yet (just talked about) or have not been perfected.

Please weigh the consequences of your actions. The quality of life and the security of America are at stake. Please tell your fellow Congressmen to do what is best for our survival and our way of life.

JIM.

We can all say our woes, and how much it cost, but we have to keep going. What I do not get it, why are we not using our own resources? Why are we not becoming self sufficient. If we are ever under attack, I ask you, who will come to our aid? Exactly—no one!

We need to pull back to the basics here. We are fighting terrorist, as rightly we should. But, they cannot just hurt us with guns and bombs. They can infect our food we receive from overseas, send disease, and undermine our food sources, our fuel sources. This does not take a rocket scientist to figure out. I am just a wife, mother, grandmother working her everyday job and I can see the light.

America needs to wake up before we are in worse shape than we are now. We send so much overseas. Send them the knowledge to care for themselves. We import so much; why-I have no idea. Wonder why we have so many out-of-work people. We do nothing but outsource everything and take away from our own American families. And why?

I have lived in Nebraska and Kansas; I see oil pumps standing still. Can you please explain why that is? I see no reason. Please, this is your country going down the tubes and no one is going to save it but us.

CINDY.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my thoughts on the current gasoline price/oil price fiasco. As an retiree in the state of Idaho, I have a fixed income. It is not quite to the point of "gas or food," but could be soon under the current trend. We have significantly altered the way we live.

Some people have said how much it now costs them to go to the coast. We cannot afford to go to the coast as much as I would like to see family and do some chartered fishing. We carefully evaluate local trips to see if they are truly necessary, and attendance at many events within a couple hours drive is eliminated. The cost of oil is tied to most things for transportation, extraction/harvesting and processing. That results in less we can buy as the cost goes up.

It seems we are unofficially under "economic sanctions" by OPEC." Under a pure supply and demand situation, we should see the price of oil/gasoline drop when the demand drops. Lately when we drop our demand for oil, the OPEC scales back oil production-keeping the supply low to keep the demand up and the prices high. This is basically declaring economic war on the world in general, and the US in particular. We need to increase our production to override some of this manipulation of our economy. It is time to remove the restrictions on energy development from oil shale.

The argument that oil companies have "lots of unused land they have leases on" is an argument from someone with no idea of how the system works. The companies lease the land to explore and then develop when it is profitable. The oil companies know the potential of lands under their leases by geologic maps and test drilling, and for many areas the time/price is not right for extraction of that oil to be profitable. On other acres under lease there may be no oil at all!

Oil speculation is another issue that keeps us on high alert. I understand the rules have been changed to allow wild speculation without controls. It is time for the US to become energy self-sufficient, including the use of our own oil, wind and other resources.

JAMES, Boise.

So, how are gas prices affecting us? Not much. You see, we have always considered it a civic duty to try and limit our use of our natural resources. We drive modest, fuel-efficient cars. We choose to live in an area that allows us options to use alternate transportation such as bicycles, public transport, and walking. I am not writing this to be smug. My point is that citizens can, and should, take measures to reduce their use of fossil fuels. Nowhere in the Constitution does it guarantee cheap gas.

Just as I think the citizens have a duty to limit their use of natural resources, I think our political leaders need to make the tough call and instead of reading melodramatic letters about someone not being able visit their dying relative, explain to them that the days of cheap gas are gone and we need to invest in public transport and more fuel efficient vehicles. The drumbeat for more drilling is not the answer either. Our political leaders are doing a disservice to us by bringing up the issue. We need to wean ourselves from our reliance on oil and not add to it.

Boise is a great city and could be a leader in innovative alternatives to gas guzzling vehicles caught in gridlock. It will take strong political will and citizens ready to do their civic duty to their neighbors and their children.

TIM, Boise.

If we would drill for our own oil instead of allowing our enemies drill for our oil it would make a big difference. Another thought that might help would be to at least limit the amount of refined oil that leaves our country and keep it here it would also make a big difference.

BOB and CINDY.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak out. I have lived in Idaho Falls my whole life. I am a father of three, married, and have a modest home. Over the past five years, my wife and I have made it our goal to get out of debt, pay off our home early, and save for retirement. I am sure you have heard similar stories before. I am an average guy, with an average income, with an average house.

In order to put things into perspective, I would like to go back to December 2002. Gas prices at that time were \$1.30 per gallon give or take a few cents. In 2003, they rose to \$1.80. By 2004, they rose again to nearly \$2.00 per gallon. In 2005 we saw prices hit \$2.50 mark and above. By 2006, Idahoans were paying \$3.00 and above for a gallon of gas. As 2007 approached, gas prices were in the \$3.50 range. As we approach the mid-point of summer 2008, a gallon of fuel is now at the \$4.00 mark for regular. I might add here that gas is typically cheaper as winter approaches and demands for fuel are not as great. So these figures are just representative numbers at a glance.

As you can see, a gallon of gas has tripled in price since 2002. If you were to look at historical data, you would find that gasoline

prices were stable from about 1985 through most of 2002. For about 17 years, Americans enjoyed what I would consider a fair price for a gallon of gas. I did some research on current gas prices in Iran and Iraq.

Currently Iran pays 5 cents per liter and Iraq pay 8 cents per liter. If you were to convert liters to gallons, it would take 3.78 liters per gallon. If you were to buy 4 liters of gas (over a gallon), it would cost 20 cents in Iran, 32 cents in Iraq. See link for pricing http://www.nationmaster.com/red/graph/ene_gas_pri-energy-gasoline-prices&b_desc=1. I could go on, but you get the point. Oil being produced by these countries is reaping the benefit of cheaper prices.

I must digress a moment. I now need to complain. Remember, I am the average guy with the average income. I would like to talk about how rising fuel prices have affected my family. As fuel prices rise, so have other commodities. Produce, meats, poultry, grains, and dairy have all spiked in the last year. Consumer goods and durables have also risen. The past three years have been very difficult to stay on a budget since gas prices have raised so dramatically. Our family is committed to stay out of consumer debt. We have no credit cards nor do we have any store credit that we borrow from. Both of the vehicles we own are pre-2000 year models. We do not overspend what we make but we feel the crunch and feel that we make less money now than when we did four years ago. The dollar just does not stretch enough these days. It is frustrating and depressing as we budget our money each month down to the penny.

Now that I have got that off my chest, what is the solution? I firmly believe that America has the technology now to manufacture and make our own fuels. There are many alternative fuels out there that can and already have been developed. Grain alcohol is viable. Continued exploration of fossil fuels is also very important. Alternative energy sources need to be used more. Wind Power in south east Idaho needs to be tapped. Solar energy is another avenue. Electric cars are also viable and cheaper to drive and cleaner than any gas engine. Countries that manufacture their own fuels always pay less at the pump. Why cannot we do the same? Another idea is to offer incentives to states to develop, manufacture, and sell the cheapest (and best) fuels. Regardless of what people think, nuclear power is one of the cheapest and cleanest sources of power on the planet. There are many countries that use nuclear power (Japan) and have for many years without mishap. We need to move forward start implementing existing technology that is proven to work.

Again, my ideas are not new. This technology is here now. It has been developed. We just need to implement it. Thank you for your time and hope this letter reaches you in good health. I think you are doing a super job for us in the Senate.

MARK, *Idaho Falls.*

I would like to see the speed limit reduced to 55 mph. Everybody knows how that would benefit energy and lives. The 75 mph speed limit between Boise and Mountain Home should be the first one reduced. Then cut the 65 mph between Boise and Mc Call. (and right up the line)

DONABETH, *Boise.*

I am 63 years old and last year, right before the prices went out of control, already had purchased an electric bike to use to get to work. Fortunately I only live a little over a mile away and can use this bike that goes 15 miles an hour. My determination to ride this bike increased as the hot days turned into colder ones and I was able to ride my bike

through November so I would not have to fill the pick-up with gas too much. Government wants us to recycle to help environment and I am all for it, but when we try to do our part, we do not get any help in return. If you do get an electric car which no one can afford but the wealthy.

I see my single parent daughter trying to commute and make ends meet and it gets increasingly difficult because with gas prices she goes with less food for family, etc.

I think it is outrageous for our country and politicians to allow these price increases when we have the means to take care of this country. 20 years ago they spoke of getting alternatives and did not push this issue and had they done so much more could have been done. I am afraid that before long we will see violence in this country mainly because our jobs are gone, price increases in every area of products, but no one ever increases the wages to meet the demands of other increase. What is the matter with people in government and businesses?

I do not like to see government control but because our business people will not use common sense to see what happens when the jobs go there is not sufficient jobs to go and buy the products. What is wrong with this picture? We need to start taxing products from overseas that come here so business's will come back to the states and put our people back to work. How sad our government has deserted their own people.

I am hoping with all my heart that someone will step up to the plate and really try to make a difference. We have to do something as everything is getting out of control and it is sad because of what our forefathers have tried to do before us to make it a great country. I am angry and I do not like politics but when I see people trying to do well for their families and that means is taken away from them someone needs to speak up.

DEVERA, *Nampa.*

Many of our family members are opting out of a treasured activity this summer because of the fuel prices: we normally have a family reunion (as everyone is all over the place) and meet each other and catch up. Many aren't coming because as they said, "I just cannot afford to pay the gas to drive there and plane tickets are just as expensive." My sister and I would not think twice normally about taking a drive down to our relatives or drive to get to our vacation spot, but now we are rethinking going on vacation at all. My family and I have also started buying online because it is cheaper than driving around town to find what we need. We have also cut down our "dining out" to practically once every two months (if that). If the local businesses aren't feeling the consequences of that, I'll be surprised because my family is not the only one that is doing it.

We aren't getting as much fresh produce in our diets this year because they just cost too much (the grocer claims that the fuel prices are affecting the food prices). This also makes us buy less food and the cheaper brands. I have even caught myself of suspecting the grocer and the gas station manager of glutting themselves by gouging us with the "it is OPEC's fault you pay so much" (and these people are my neighbors, which makes me feel a little ashamed of myself).

All of this is only the parts of my life where I have seen the biggest impact. I really cannot think of many aspects in my life that have not been affected by the fuel hikes. Hope this enlightens you to the trials of at least one voter.

JEORGETTE.

I do not have much of a different story than many other Idahoans. I work hard each

day 11 to 12 hours. I live in a rural area of Canyon County, so ride-sharing or car-pooling is not a viable option for me. I have to drive 18 miles to work so riding a bike is not an option especially after putting in a 12 hour day. I drive a small pick up Chevy S-10 to help reduce my gas usage, my wife in I traded in our ford tarsus for a KIA Spectra last November to help save money and protect our budget of the current (November 07) high gas prices.

What I can say is that the only way out of our current situation is for our Congress to show OPEC, that we are willing to take back control of our oil dependence.

ROBERT.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mrs. Neiman, 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.)

NOTICE RELATIVE TO THE CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO THE ACTIONS AND POLICIES OF CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE AND OTHER PERSONS TO UNDERMINE ZIMBABWE'S DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES OR INSTITUTIONS—PM 10

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report, which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice to the *Federal Register* for publication, stating that the national emergency with respect to the actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Zimbabwe and other persons to undermine Zimbabwe's democratic processes or institutions is to continue in effect beyond March 6, 2009.

The crisis constituted by the actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Zimbabwe and other persons to undermine Zimbabwe's democratic processes or institutions