

us in Congress and to the American people how their decisions affect good-paying jobs and the long-term strength of our industrial base.

My amendment will help to ensure that our industrial base is capable of meeting our national security objectives. It took us a very long time to build our industrial base. We have machinists who have past experience and know-how down the ranks for more than 50 years. We have engineers who know our mission, know the needs of our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines. We have a reputation for delivering for our military. But once those plants shut down, those industries are gone. We not only lose the jobs, but we lose the skills and the potential ability to provide our military with the equipment to defend our Nation and project our might worldwide. Preserving a healthy domestic base also breeds competition. That is good for innovation and, ultimately, for our taxpayers.

So today, as we begin this very serious and necessary conversation on procurement reform, we cannot afford to forget the needs of our industrial base. We have to consider how we achieve reform while continuing to support the development of our industrial base here at home.

It calls for thoughtful planning and projection about who our future enemies might possibly be and how they might possibly try to defeat us in this Nation. It is critical that our country and our military maintain a nimble and dynamic base. Once a new threat is identified, a solution has to be close at hand.

The discussion we are having on procurement reform in the Senate is happening as our country faces two difficult but not unrelated challenges: winning an international war on terror and rebuilding a faltering economy. It would be irresponsible not to include the needs of our industrial base as we move forward because unless we begin to address this issue now, we are not only going to continue to lose some of our best paying American jobs, we are going to lose the backbone of our military might.

I will be offering this amendment, and I would love to have the support of our colleagues to make sure we have a strong nation in the future.

ACADEMIC EXCHANGE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, in early April of 2003, a professor of engineering at United Arab Emirates University contacted an American professor at the Worcester, MA, Polytechnic Institute about spending the summer in Worcester as a visiting professor. By late May his visit had been arranged—he would come for the months of July and August, the time when he was not teaching in the UAE, and they would collaborate on research on axiomatic design and fractal analysis of manufactured surfaces.

On June 7 the UAE professor applied for a nonimmigrant visa for June 27—

August 26. Apart from being called back to the consulate for fingerprinting on June 22 and told that he would receive an answer in the next 2 to 3 weeks, he heard nothing in response to his inquiries other than a reminder to check his visa application status on the embassy Web site. On August 9, with still no sign of his record on the Web site and the beginning of his fall semester approaching, he cancelled his plans and stayed at home in the UAE.

Without any information about the reason for the delay it is impossible to determine whether it was due to some legitimate concern or more likely the result of a bureaucratic logjam. But at a minimum, the professor should have received a response informing him of the status of his application before June 27. Instead, he and his American colleague were left in the dark to wonder, and had no choice but to cancel their research plans which would have been mutually beneficial, as well as for their students.

This is one incident; however, it is illustrative of the larger problem of foreign scholars and teachers being denied entry into the United States not because of travel bans, but because of delays and inefficiencies in the visa application process, particularly in geographical regions of concern for the Department of Homeland Security.

Transnational academic collaboration is, if not politically blind, politically myopic. Diplomats sit across from each other, even when meeting in friendship, to resolve differences. To study, the parties sit on the same side of the table and, irrespective of national, religious, ethnic or political backgrounds, focus on what they have in common. Some fields of study are so universal that they transcend language—mathematics does not need a common tongue for collaboration to happen.

This is in no way meant to disparage diplomacy, which has been and will continue to be the keystone of how governments interact. It emphasizes differences because it addresses them—academic collaboration will never negotiate an arms reduction treaty. But neither should we be limited by thinking that diplomacy is the only way of working towards understanding between two societies.

Nor is this type of academic exchange limited to technical or scientific work. I am reminded of when, after Robert Frost's visit to the Soviet Union in 1962, Siberian poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko wrote to him "I have read your poems again and again today, and I am glad you live on Earth." I picture Frost and Yevtushenko talking about the rural beauties of their homeland, Frost of Ripton, VT and Yevtushenko of Stantsiya Zima, Siberia.

It is not only relations that we damage and the resentment we create by limiting these partnerships. The United States and the world also lose the body of scholarship that would

have been produced. In no academic discipline is anyone so bold as to suggest that knowledge lies only on one side of a fence or of an ocean.

To the foreign scholars who would study and do research here, I would say that in the post-9/11 world our immigration laws and procedures have indeed become more stringent, burdensome and time consuming. But do not interpret that as a sign that you are not welcome or that your presence is not desired. To the contrary, it is valuable—indispensable to you, to us and to the rest of the world.

It is also undeniable that during the Bush administration some of the immigration laws and regulations, enacted in haste to respond to 9/11, crossed the line between keeping a vigilant watch over our borders and creating unnecessary and illogical barriers to entry for those who pose no danger. The Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State deserve credit for their efforts to keep our borders secure, but I also urge them to continually review their policies and procedures to make sure they are keeping out those who need to be kept out, but facilitating the entry of those whose presence we want and need.

The case of the UAE professor is, again, one example. But it did not only inconvenience the two professors; such cases can have a compounding, ripple effect as family members, friends and colleagues conclude that it is pointless, and potentially humiliating, to apply for a visa to study, teach or conduct academic research in the United States. At a time when we should be doing everything possible to rebuild our image abroad, particularly in predominantly Muslim countries, this is not the message we should be sending.

As the Departments of Homeland Security, State and Justice continue to review their policies they should look closely at these issues. If existing laws regarding who and what constitute legitimate security risks need to be clarified, then the administration should come to Congress with a recommendation. If the problem is a lack of staff or other resources to process visa applications in a timely manner, we can allocate the funds necessary to ensure that legitimate visa applicants get the prompt and fair consideration they are due. But whatever the cause of the problem, it needs to be fixed.

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:

Do not you think it is time to do something about the current price gouging on gasoline, even if it means leaning on the refiners in Utah? The price of oil has dropped about 27% off of the high point as of just a few moments ago, and has been hovering around the 23-25% drop for some time now, yet we do not see even a 10% drop in price at the pumps. I know that the retailers have taken advantage of the holiday weekend to make extra money, and hopefully now they will have the heart to drop the prices to levels that are fair.

Please move our country forward in domestic drilling so we may be less dependent on foreign oil. It would also help to curtail some of the terrorist activities, as we are funding some of that with each purchase of oil, maybe indirectly but funding just the same. I do not wish to finance terrorism or gold and diamond encrusted planes and autos for some Sheik. I would rather create jobs in America for Americans by utilizing our own resources. Thank you for reading this.

MONA.

I was employed [by a printing company] in Idaho Falls. I greatly enjoyed my job, and it helped give us the opportunity to purchase our first home in January 2008, which is located in the Ammon, Idaho area. We have been married for 15 years and have been working and saving for the day when we could purchase our first home. This has been my wife's dream to have a home of her own with a small garden. When we purchased this home, the first thing we did after the snow of winter had gone was to erect a 22-foot flag pole in the front yard. You see this has always been my dream to have a home of my own where I could display and show my love for this great country and its beautiful flag. It is also my way of paying respect and saying thank you to the many men and women that have fought to protect the freedoms I have been privileged to enjoy as a citizen of The United States of America.

On July 9, 2008, I was laid off from my employment because of slow business due to high-energy cost. One of their main customers is [a meat packing company], which has in the past ordered thousands of labels for their meat packing lines and international markets. I have been searching for other employment, but it is hard if not impossible to find a company or business that has not been affected by the out-of-control gas and energy prices.

I am now 55 years old and have worked my whole life to have the so-called American Dream. I know from personal experience what it is like to go hungry or to have no place to lay your head at night or shelter from the cold of a January night. These were very hard times and I do not wish to repeat them. It is upsetting to realize that we could lose it all just because of the greed of a few and the unwillingness of [our leaders] to in-

tervene on behalf of the American people. Instead it is like watching a bunch of kids fighting over a toy in a sandbox, [our elected leaders] need to stop fighting and start working together for the good of the American people. In the Williston oil basin which covers Montana, the Dakotas and Wyoming, there are oil wells that were capped in the 1970s. From studies, this oil could carry the U.S. for the next 100 years or more—that is if we used it to supply only the U.S. and not other nations. So I ask you just what are we waiting for, a rainy day? I find it most interesting that the United States is the greatest super power in the world, but yet we cannot work together in Congress to resolve the issues facing our nation for fear the other political party may take or get credit for it. As an American citizen and taxpayer my message is to forget political lines and yourselves and just go to work together. I, for one, am tired of losing everything we have worked so hard for including our future just because [partisan politics prevent solutions from being found.]

I now ask all the members of Congress to work to save this great nation and our economy from total collapse and to restore the United States of America to that grandeur this nation once enjoyed. A house, nation, government, or people, divided against itself cannot stand or long endure. Ladies and Gentlemen of the U.S. Congress, the Constitution of the United States of America and the future of this great nation and its citizens are now in your hands. Please respect the sacred trust you have been given and honor the integrity of the office in which you now stand.

WALTER.

I have been an Idahoan all my life. I would not want to live anywhere else, and I love my state. I live on the news awhile back about you wanting input on the gas prices and such. Well, I have more than that that concerns me.

First, I cannot believe the prices of gas. I use a lot of gas. I am a caregiver and I drive to my work two times a day, five days a week. I have had to borrow money just to get there and back. I should let you know I make an average of \$400 a month; my husband makes around \$1,200 a month. I receive a mere \$6 in food stamps. The DHW say we make too much. We do not make enough to pay all our expenses. We cannot seem to get ahead of anything. I just got a ticket for no insurance. I cannot afford it. What am I to do? I have so many things to pay for. I could burden you with all my problems but I am not going to. Tell me, is there a low-income insurance agency around for people like me? I read about grants, but you have to pay just to get a little information. There are so many families that are in the same situation as I am; we try to do right, but get punished in other ways. We should not have to worry about how to get back and forth to work. How am I going to feed my family? How am I going to pay for everything so I do not lose it! I want to go to school to get my GED so I can become a nurse of some kind. I really want to be a doctor's assistant but I cannot because I have to support my family with what little I make. I cannot afford to lose any hours. I have a lot more I can complain about but it would take me all day. But this sums it up to the shortest degree. Thank you for listening to me.

CHRYSATALYNN, Nampa.

As crude oil begins to express its omnipresence amongst the consumers of this nation as a relevant component, that has raised a multitude of concern as transportation energy is now being brought forth—even with the expectations of food consump-

tion as mentioned and expressed. As Americans are being brought to maintain and conserve what is left of this planet, transportation energy assumptions are now being presented to becoming a considerable difference when considering crop production rather for the purpose of food or a new found energy material. It seems that we as a consumer nation are stuck at a losing crossroad when the expectation of cost efficiency is approached and considered. Will the current crop land begin to be used for this process as new innovative responses towards transportation energy is expressed amongst this nation of consumers?

I do not think that this question has been asked by any consumer as the efforts are being presented to align this nation into a position to have safe and environmental friendly responses to all considerations that may arise as trends and new found provisions are being considered and met.

What are the responses expected from bringing forth a theory that fuel for the purpose of energy with the regards of transportation is expressed, what other questions and responses will arise from what seems to be a Third World theory of effective enterprising?

AARON.

Thank you for this opportunity to voice my opinion about the rising energy costs. We are seeing the effects of the escalating gas prices in every aspect of our family finances. We feel like the high price of gas has made me more cautious about how we spend money in all areas of our life from groceries, to activities we choose to let our children participate in, vacation, entertainment, and home repair/new home purchases. Our family is thrifty, we look for deals, we are conservative in our spending and we are consistently building our savings, yet we are still seeing a constant and steady increase in prices that are causing us to be concerned.

We appreciate your efforts to vote on issues that will lower our energy costs. We support the idea of drilling here in the United States and would like to see that starting so that the benefits of on shore drilling can begin sooner than later. Thank you for representing Idaho well.

BOB and CHARLYNN.

As you requested I am responding to your request to itemize some ways that my family and I are adversely affected by the extreme increases in the cost of energy. I live in a rural area of southeast Idaho. We are about fifteen miles south of Idaho Falls. As you accurately mentioned, there is no public transportation available in this area. We are suffering with the cost of gas especially but not just that. We heat our home, and water with propane, and the cost of that has gone through the roof also. The cost of electricity has doubled too. The bottom line is my income is not increasing at the rate the utility costs are increasing. This is becoming a real burden on my family.

DAVE, Firth.

You guys have got it all wrong: the problem is the consumption not the supply. We are not getting out of this mess by drilling for more oil. The only way is to use less oil. We need more hydro electric, solar power, nuclear energy, Stop building coal and gas power plants that only make our air worse. The air is getting so bad we are soon going to have air filtration systems for our homes and for our gas-guzzling cars so we can leave our homes. We will never have cheap gas again, so let us get on with something that makes sense for a change. I am amazed that the people of this country have not [protested], demanding some action. I do think there are enough concerned voters to crush

the stalemate in Washington. The biggest problem is no one is listening to any of the experts on our problems. Everyone just blunders ahead whether anything makes sense or not. We are going to keep spending like there is no tomorrow and then turn around and give people tax refunds. Where did we find the math that makes that work? I could go on and on for days. [but it does not appear to make any difference to our political leaders.]

DAVE.

If it is not already in the works, please consider sponsoring a bill to raise the IRS mileage deduction. It is now at 50½ cents per mile, which is inadequate given the increases in gas, oil, tires, and other related auto products. I am a small business owner in Bonner County, and I travel nearly seven days per week to service clients. Some days I am all over this very large county! Though I usually drive a Honda Civic, even it is becoming expensive to drive. If I raise my prices, I will surely lose some business. Many other business owners are suffering, too.

LXIE.

First, as for fuel prices. I am sure you have heard most all opinions on how to attempt to solve this issue. I believe there needs to be both short-term and long-range solutions. For the short term, off-shore and North Slope oil drilling needs to be allowed to provide some near-term relief on fuel prices. In addition, new refineries need to be allowed/encouraged in the U.S. as soon as possible. Long term—there needs to be an all-out funding of R&D to provide renewable energy for both transportation and to sustain our homes. I believe in this great nation we can harness the energy of the sun, etc. to provide unlimited renewable energy.

Also another issue close to home is jobs. It is very disturbing the rate at which we are losing jobs to India, etc. due to outsourcing. The corporate environment today is to save a buck at any cost, even sending jobs to under-developed countries. At my place of business, we have seen over the last seven years, many, many technology jobs go out of the country. In addition, just recently, it was announced that many clerical jobs are also to be outsourced. What is happening is that the better-paying jobs are being sent out of the country, and we are left with the lower-paying service industry jobs and are very quickly lowering the American standard of living. Also, this is also happening during tough economic times along with the rising energy costs.

It seems that Congress and our countries leadership is more concerned with everyone else around the world except our own citizens. In this area, there needs to be some kind of tax penalty/incentive to keep these jobs here, in America. If there is no economic benefit to outsource, the jobs will come back.

BEN, *Parma*.

Thanks for being interested in energy; our family sees the future as pretty bleak. Return to the Carter years, high energy prices, stagflation, no raises, general depression. We have upped our level pay on natural gas, expecting the price to double. We have rearranged our budget, less food and entertainment, etc. Far less travel. But I have to ask [if there are not some of our political leaders who want the U.S. economy to slow down. They view this as a way to stop lifestyles they consider wasteful.]

DAVE and MIEKE, *Pocatello*.

My biggest [worry is] fuel that we cannot afford. It is nice for our salary to go up, too. But if you only make \$8 an hour or less, it is really tough to go anywhere and even going

to work, and if you have a gas-eating vehicle, the pay is gone. How can we afford to live and a smile on your face when you put all your paycheck for the gas? Our country has to do something about this situation. When my kids asked me to go to practice for tennis, I say no, I could not afford the gas. It is very sad to see the face of my kids. And I know that it is not just me suffering for this issue. There are many more that cannot afford to even get groceries for their families. I hope that our government will do something to help our country, too.

EDITH, *Nampa*.

I began my professional career as a Forester in 1961 and have witnessed a massive change in Forest management and the timber industry. Currently my closest job involves driving 100 miles roundtrip to my closest job. I must drive a four-wheel drive pickup due to forest roads and occasional seedlings, tools etc. I would love to drive a more fuel economic vehicle but as you can see this is not an option. In terms of my business, transportation is extremely costly and typically log and pulpwood haulers charge in excess of \$2/mile to haul their product. Today it is not uncommon for a surcharge to be added.

The big push in my business today is to remove forest waste as biomass to be used as an energy source and the biggest obstacle is the cost of transporting this material out of the woods economically.

The American people with the help of Congress must address this energy crisis immediately. The answer in my opinion is to commence exploration and oil recovery (drilling) immediately, build new refining capacity, and develop and utilize alternative sources such as nuclear, hydroelectric, wind, solar, tidal, etc. I do not see this as an "either/or" situation. We need a blend of all of the aforementioned to keep our ever-expanding population and economy healthy and vibrant.

I am involved with an invention that converts forest slash into a fine powder. This machine/process reduces weight and volume by roughly 40%, has fertilizer value, food value, and appears to be the breakthrough for the cellulosic production of ethanol. I have a report describing this invention that I would be willing and eager to share with you or your representative in Boise at your convenience.

LEWIS, *Eagle*.

My wife and I have recently started a small business in Idaho. Outrageous gas prices are making it hard to get this young company off the ground. My wife has quit her job of six years to finish school full-time at BSU. We figured we could live comfortably without her income but with the gas prices constantly rising we are getting a little uncomfortable about our decision. We feel that Congress needs to do something immediately to help the working people of this country.

SAM, *Nampa*.

I work in southern Idaho at the Idaho National Lab and the lab workers who work way out in the desert work a four-day work week. This helps keep the price to commute low. We here in town work a 9X80 schedule. It would behoove us to look at making the standard work week four days, possibly. I had seen on the news that a couple of the other states have enacted that legislation. Here in Idaho, where we have such wide open expanses and so far to drive in many cases, it could potentially save a lot of money.

MELISSA, *Ammon*.

I am a 68-year-old taxpaying American citizen, and military veteran. I work in Spo-

kane, Washington. It is getting increasingly more difficult to afford the gas to drive to and from work. Carpooling or the use of public transportation is out of the question as I work in the construction industry on various jobs throughout the Spokane area. It appears that some elected people in Congress are letting the environmental lobbyists and their corrupt judges run our country.

The time has come to start drilling for oil in Alaska, Colorado, Wyoming, and offshore. From what has been in the news and from what we read in various publications, all from very intelligent engineers and scientists, we know the oil is there. We have shale deposits in several states that we could be using. We need to work harder on wind and nuclear power. The states want to drill, and we need to lift the federal bans.

We should either sell or give the abandoned military bases to companies willing to build refineries on them. The time has come to quit asking—it is time to demand that this be done. We have the resources, let us use them. The United States of America should not have to go begging to other countries for oil when we have it within our own shores.

We, the people, should not be suffering these exorbitant prices due to the incompetence in all areas of our government, and speculators in the stock market.

WAYNE, *Coeur d'Alene*.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING WEST ANCHORAGE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

● Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, I am proud to announce a class from West Anchorage High School represented the State of Alaska by winning national distinction at the National We The People: The Citizen and the Constitution National Finals. These outstanding students, through their knowledge of the U.S. Constitution, won Alaska's statewide competition and earned the chance to come to our Nation's Capital and compete at the national level.

This competition involved a 3-day academic competition simulating a congressional hearing in which students demonstrate their knowledge and skills as they evaluate, take, and defend positions on historical and contemporary constitutional issues.

The students from West Anchorage High School were the Nation's top performers in the competition's unit on How the Values and Principles Embodied in the Constitution Shaped American Institutions and Practices. This year is the 50th year of Alaska's statehood and while we may be one of the youngest States, the performance of these students is indicative of the unique contributions Alaska has made to America's institutions and practices.

I had the distinction of meeting these students so it makes me even more proud to recognize them on behalf of the State of Alaska. The names of these outstanding students from West Anchorage High School are: Grace Abbott, Sinivevela Aho, Spencer Bailly, Gizelle Baylon, Colby Bleicher, Blake Young, Jacqueline Braden, Santana