

**Statement Of**  
**DEIDRE JACKSON**  
**before the**  
**U. S. Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations**  
**St. Paul, Minnesota Field Hearing**  
**Hearing On**  
*Volatility in the Natural Gas Market:*  
*The Impact of High Natural Gas Prices On American Consumers*  
**February 13, 2006**

Good morning Senator Coleman, my name is Deidre Jackson. I am a single mother, a working professional and a college student. Each is really a full time profession and I am trying to juggle all three. I am like so many other working single mothers who struggle to raise their children, work and attend school. As I am sure you know, raising children properly is a very expensive proposition and I am no exception in that I want the best that I can provide for my children.

I have three children ages 14, 8, and 6. I work full time for the Minnesota Department of Human Services as a health care claims specialist. In my position, I am responsible for processing health care claims for medical assistance. I also attend Metropolitan State University where I am studying for a degree in business administration.

I bought my home on the East side of St. Paul in February 1998. It is an older home and in the Fall of 1999, the Weatherization Assistance Program replaced my weather stripping and added insulation. I also had my windows replaced. I have an old furnace in my home and would like to replace it with a new energy efficient model, but I simply cannot afford it.

Even with the improvements to my home's insulation, my heating bills keep going up. In December 2004 my heating bill was \$309 and this December it was \$649. My bill has increased over 100 percent in spite of the energy efficiency improvements that I have made to increase my home's energy efficiency. I am already receiving assistance through an energy assistance program and my bill would have been higher without that assistance. My December bill does not include over \$2,000 I owe Xcel for past heating bills. I expect that I will have to use most of my tax refund this year to pay off my outstanding heating bill. I would much prefer to spend my tax refund money on my children, but I have to heat my home.

Other than replacing my furnace, I do not know what more I can do to try and save money on my heating bill. I have asked EnergyCents to come to my home and do an energy audit. These increasing gas prices are really putting the squeeze on my family and any help you can provide would be appreciated. Thank you and I would be glad to answer your questions.

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