

For his many decades of service, Senator Stevens has received and accepted numerous honors—including having the Anchorage International Airport named after him.

Back in 1993, when I first arrived in the U.S. Senate, I was one of only seven female Senators, and if the Senate was a men's club, then the Appropriations Committee was its inner sanctum.

There was not a single woman on the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, but that is where I wanted to serve.

I explained to Senator Stevens—who was then the ranking member of the committee—that Texas has more Army soldiers than any other State, more Air Force airmen and women stationed in Texas than any other State, and our defense industry builds everything from fighter aircraft to Army trucks to artillery systems to sophisticated electronics equipment for the Pentagon.

Therefore, I hoped to be able to serve on that committee.

After some careful thought, Senator Stevens agreed, and welcomed me to the Committee.

Senator Stevens has been known to show dramatic performances on the Senate floor, keeping wandering eyes focused on the urgent issues that need to be addressed.

One day, during a mark-up in the Senate Appropriations Committee, Senator Stevens, who chaired the committee at the time, grew very animated and laid down the law.

When a frustrated senior Senator told Senator Stevens that “there was no reason to lose your temper,” Senator Stevens glared back and responded, “I never lose my temper. I always know exactly where I left it.”

Senator Stevens acknowledges his quick temper; but those who know him see the other side—a compassionate heart.

I will never forget when a group of protestors gathered outside of the Appropriations Committee conference to demand increased funding for breast cancer research.

One particularly agitated advocate got in Senator Stevens' face and said, “If men were dying of breast cancer, you wouldn't think twice about increasing the funding.”

Needless to say, those words made quite an impact on Senator Stevens, but probably not what this advocate anticipated.

When Senator Stevens walked back into the conference, he repeated the charge and then looked around at his mostly male colleagues.

He knew that at least 6 of them suffered from prostate cancer.

He also noticed that the bill they were considering didn't fund prostate cancer research.

But thanks to the excellent suggestion of the woman in the hallway, he became an advocate for breast cancer research and prostate cancer research. Senator Stevens became a leader on these issues.

He has been a champion of a strong national defense and of the men and women who serve in the military.

I wish him and his family the best.

CRISIS IN GAZA

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, when President Obama is sworn into office next week, he will inherit an extremely complex and challenging crisis in the Middle East. Since Israel commenced military operations in Gaza to defend its citizens against rocket attacks more than 1,000 have died in Gaza, many of them civilians, while 13 Israelis have died. In spite of this carnage, Hamas refuses to surrender and continues to fire rockets into Israel. No clear resolution is in sight.

As a practicing physician, I find this conflict heartbreaking. Israelis live in constant fear that a rocket attack will snuff out an innocent life. Families in Israel go to bed at night wondering if a rocket will slam into their home. At the same time, Palestinians have nowhere to run from a terrorist organization that uses its own civilians as human shields.

While we all mourn the loss of innocent life, the world must recognize that Hamas deliberately created a situation in which Israel was forced to respond as any sovereign nation would while under attack. Israel, and every nation, has the right to self-defense.

What makes Hamas's actions particularly abhorrent and barbaric is the fact that they are making decisions, I believe, based on a perverse political calculation. While publically condemning Israel, Hamas's leaders and sympathizers in Iran and elsewhere privately welcome the suffering of the Palestinian people as a political opportunity. Hamas knows better than anyone that virtually every area of the densely populated Gaza strip is a civilian area. In Gaza, refugees have no place to seek refuge. The terrible unintended consequences and loss of civilian life we've seen in Gaza is part of Hamas's design and goal.

The United States and the next administration can play an important role in preventing Hamas from achieving its goals. What many on both sides long for is not just the cessation of violence but a real, lasting and durable peace. Some believe this is impossible, but it is in the interest of all sides to work toward this goal.

I trust President-elect Obama will avoid the false choice between unapologetically defending Israel's security and creating hope and opportunity for people on both sides of the conflict who want the same degree of freedom, peace and opportunity for themselves and their children. As Israel's most important ally, the United States should never waver in our commitment to Israel's security. The strength of that assurance is itself one of our most important contributions in the region because it creates the security and stability that are a

prerequisite for meaningful negotiations.

At the same time, we enhance security in the region by assuring Palestinians in Gaza with our words and actions that they are not forgotten and that we hear their calls for peace and an end to violence. I've delivered 4,000 babies and I grieve with the pregnant women in Gaza who are being turned away at hospitals because their own leaders have held their lives and the lives of their children in contempt. The next administration can legitimize and support those mothers' pleas for peace while condemning and marginalizing Hamas's tactics of terror.

I believe President-elect Obama has the judgment and temperament to not only maintain our vital support of Israel, but to also create hope in the region and help Palestinians embrace alternatives to Hamas's brand of violence and despair. He will have my prayers and support and I hope he can have the prayers and support of the American people as he confronts this difficult challenge.

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:

Well, gas prices have a direct impact on my driving habits. I have been trying to use the public bus at least twice a week to get to work. It takes me about 35 minutes more each way, but if I plan my after work errands needing a car for one day, then I can bank that extra time for the bus ride. I'm lucky to live in Boise where there is some type of public transportation. My husband works the night shift in Meridian, so he is forced to use the car. The cost of food is a shocker, but again, fuel costs have contributed to that also. There are more of the basic and less of the goodies at the checkout. I do not think our family will be flying anytime soon, and if we vacation somewhere besides home, it will still be within a short day's drive. All in all, I worry more about those families who were barely surviving before, what will become of them now?

I think it is important to give tax breaks to companies, small or large, who want to develop alternative energy technologies. There are a great number of really smart people out there, I saw a man who could burn salt water and create enough energy to light a bulb. And how about the farmer who did something to his engine (in his garage workshop) to get 80 MPG. It is especially important to keep this technology and the subsequent jobs it brings here in the United States. If congress won't address these issues in a timely way, countless other countries will once again, get the jobs. And continue to give taxpayers incentives through tax breaks for purchasing fuel efficient cars, energy saving appliances, solar heating, etc. My family would purchase these products, but the cost is often prohibitive. There are hungry buyers just waiting and the cost will come down as more products are sold. It just needs a jumpstart with federal funding, then it will take off on its own. Do not do anything to lessen the impact of gas prices. Only with higher prices will habits change and new technologies emerge. The lesson is hard, but the end result will be worth it. Get rid of government supported Ethanol—it takes as much energy to make the stuff compared to what it saves.

And, let us build those super fast trains to at least run along the cities on the Eastern and Western coasts. Again, more jobs building trains, maintaining equipment, contributing to a better economy. We can either spend tax money on more roads for more gas eating cars or supplementing energy efficient systems, good for the environment, the economy and the pocketbook.

We took Amtrak from Portland to Seattle, it was \$29, but again it took 3 hours! What if it took 45 minutes? There were many business people on board, I think more people would be willing to use this type of transportation if it was timely. Time is money these days. And please give more money to small urban cities like Boise to develop light rail systems. The intercounty van ridership from Caldwell and Nampa to Boise has become so popular. ValleyBUS is adding more vans to the routes. A light rail system would work in the Boise Valley. And replace the aging buses. In the month I have ridden the bus, I have experienced at least two breakdowns. The buses are purchased used and these are so old, parts are very hard to come by. And allow some drilling and mining, I heard it will be 7-10 years before a domestic supply will be available, so it will not be the cure some think it will be. Do not allow exemptions which were originally for farm vehicles to be expanded to include cars with a like build, like Hummers. That is cheating. Make the car companies raise the MPG even higher. I read that China has tougher rules for gas mileage than we do. And, the American people are going to have to make hard choices. Cheap fuel is never going to happen again, at least not for years. We ignored the warnings during the Carter years, when gas prices were high; we need to change our enormous appetites for oversized everything, from cars to houses to McDonalds. We would all be better off to bike, walk and move to smaller houses where families actually live in the "living" room and see each other. I grew up with one car for our entire family! Could that happen in American society today? I doubt it. Maybe it is time we Americans face the consequences of our greed. It could be a humbling lesson, something we might just need.

And, to pay for all this? Get out of Iraq and rebuild the United States of America. You cannot make a democracy with just an election. Our own great country functioned without a strong federal government or President for some 10 years after defeating the British.

I think it was luck we became the greatest democracy ever, but lots of hard work to stay that way. Is Iraq able and willing to do the hard work? I do not think it is possible. We destroyed the stability in the Middle East and now it is a worse mess for our meddling. Do not allow another son or daughter or sister or brother or husband or wife to be killed, let them come home.

— DONNA LAM, Boise.

Hello Senator Mike Crapo, I am a 29 year old, single woman that is trying to do things right. I have owned my home for four years and have worked in dialysis for 5½ years. I have not gone grocery shopping in two months. I am getting where my payments are getting later and later. I do not know how people are surviving. The cost of gas, groceries, and everyday living keeps going up, but the income that we bring home does not change. I go to work and come home, I do not do anything above and beyond because I am afraid of losing everything that I have worked so hard for. I am afraid that if something is not done soon, that I am going to start loosing everything I have worked for. I used to spend about \$30.00 for gas a week now it is almost \$70.00. I live in Emmett in the city limits and the water is horrible, so I have to buy water just to drink (it turned my cat dish black). I have complained to the city but it is going on 1 year of having to buy water. Everything cost, what are the citizens expose to do?

Thank you for your time,

— ALYSSA QUENZER.

This is in response to your request for citizens to "share your energy stories."

Here are some of the results I am observing, of gas being more expensive: Traffic is (slightly) down on the overcrowded roads in and around Boise. People are getting rid of their gas-guzzlers and getting more economical modes of transportation. People are making more responsible transportation choices. (Dare I say it? Might they even consider carpooling, or utilizing public transportation?) Air pollution is down. There is some real market-driven innovation going on, in the automotive world.

In other words, the results of higher fuel prices are not all negative! Please think long and hard before getting the government more involved! (In the past, it has not always had the desired effect.)

If you could figure out some way to give the freight industry some relief, that would be a good thing. But let the free market run its course with regards to personal transportation, I say. If our economy is based on every citizen 16 and over having a private motor vehicle and unlimited access to cheap fuel . . . it is a house of cards.

Like everybody else, we in my family are affected by rising fuel prices, and are needing to be more responsible with our transportation. Is that a bad thing?

(Full disclosure: I've been a dedicated user of bicycle transportation since 1986. Gas was 97 cents back then. It makes even more sense in 2008 for my fellow citizens to seriously consider their own transportation choices, than it did back in 1986.)

Thanks for your attention.

— STEVE HULME, 4TH-GENERATION TAXPAYING IDAHO CITIZEN, Boise.

My biggest concern is the lack of balance with the cost of living and the working wages. Cost of living is increasing faster than employers/corporations are able (or willing) to keep up with. I am very worried about the near future. With two kids to raise, trying to keep them involved in sports and other extra-curricular activities is becoming more of a challenge. I do not want to

be forced to make a decision of gas in the car to get my kids to and from or my children's well-being.

What Americans want are politicians who do what they say they will do. Not empty promises to get into office. At what cost does it come? Our children, our future.

Why do these power companies continue to get approvals for price increases? Who is benefiting from this? If the Government doesn't think we are in a recession now, just wait, it is just around the corner. I know for my family as well as many other families, spending is no longer frivolous, let us-treat-ourselves-for-our-hard-work spending, it is thought through heavily. We have no choice.

With the wealth of our country, there should not be the amount of homeless (or soon-to-be) people due to lack of money/resources to keep a roof over their heads and food on the table. I am ashamed at the direction our country has taken. Now I see it only getting worse.

I was visiting with a fellow co-worker today who helps feed those not necessarily homeless but left with little to no money left after paying bills at the end of the month for food. She collects food like a shelter, from local businesses, then disburses the food accordingly. In just two weeks time, the number of people she serves/helps went from 92 to 120. Unfortunately she was unable to help them all, not enough food due to a decrease in donations.

Something has got to give and it should no longer be the American people/families! Instead, we need to be at the receiving end. Help our own in this country to survive.

— A VERY CONCERNED MOM.

Good day Mike, my story is: I am a 50 year old disabled woman; my income is social security of 671.00 plus an arrears child support order from 1992 in which I receive 201.00 a month in 50.34 weekly payments. I am almost over the limit for Idaho Medicaid and am what is called the QM plan. I have no dental and no vision. Part D helps with prescriptions and Medicare pays some. I am eligible for about 10.00 in food stamps which I do not collect because at my last recertification, I just could not justify the gas and time for the 10.00 that really is not that helpful. It has been a very cold winter; my energy cost in the trailer I own and only pay lot rent for [cheap housing], have made my life very hard; I have had to choose between power and food for months since October to be exact, my electric and gas have been between 250.00 & 300.00, finally my energy due on the 20th of June is 107.00, last year it was 65.00 or so this time of year. I have a 20 year old daughter that lives at home and goes to LCSC full time thank you Lord for grants and loans. I cannot remember the last time I went to the grocery store and bought food, we live out of food banks and milk has become a luxury, from Walmart. Our 2 dogs' food comes from the humane society. My car is always on empty; 2.5 gallons of gas is 10.00. Please help us up the food stamp limit; disabled people should not have to worry about food, how about a fixed amount for disabled people comparable to their income, lower energy prices, fixed prices for energy to heat disabled people's homes. I do not mind paying my own power but up to or over ½ of my monthly income. Help. Thank You:

— DEB.

As a solution to today's obscene fuel prices, a lot of people talk about expanding domestic production. What nobody realizes is that the same people who would be drilling for and producing this oil are the same people who are currently holding us up at the pump. Think about it: If Chevron/Texaco can sell us gasoline at \$4.00 a gallon, does it

make sense for them to invest millions (probably billions) of dollars in the exploration and production of increased oil supplies so in order to sell us gasoline at \$2.50 a gallon? Spend money to reduce profits? If Ford were selling all the new F-150 pickups they could produce for \$30,000 each, would they spend billions to expand their assembly line so they could sell 25 percent more trucks for \$22,500 each? Of course not, they would keep the price at \$30,000 and enjoy the increased profits. And the oil companies will do the same thing. Increasing oil supplies will only give the big oil companies more oil to sell at \$120 a barrel and will not drive the price at the pump down one bit.

There's no competition in the oil industry, the regulating bodies have allowed too many mergers resulting in a few super-companies that are all in bed together. The only way you could make an idea like dramatically expanding domestic production work is if you started a completely new, independent company to find and extract the new oil, then build new refineries to turn it into a usable product, then build an entirely new distribution infrastructure to get the product to the consumers. That would cost trillions of dollars and it will never happen.

Gasoline costs \$4.00 a gallon because we are still buying it at \$4.00 a gallon. That is the simple truth. Our country's entire infrastructure depends on gas and diesel engines in cars, trucks, planes, and ships to get products and people from Point A to Point B. And I will be the first one to admit, I am not prepared to quit driving my car, so I am as much a part of the problem as anyone. But short of a federal cap on consumer gasoline and diesel fuel prices, competition and reduced demand are the only things that will drive down the price of retail gasoline. Until that happens, we are just hosed.

CARL BLOOMQUIST, *Nampa*.

First I would like to thank you for taking the time to listen to the people on this subject.

Our brief story: 6 months ago we had two cars and a truck. We could not afford to drive the truck any longer so we sold it and paid off one of our cars. That helped for a while but the gas prices kept creeping up. I work downtown and we are fortunate enough to live close to a bus route. Now I pay \$36.00 for a monthly Valley Ride pass and I ride the bus every day. That takes an additional hour of time a day but now we save close to \$100.00 a month in gas by doing that. But the gas prices are still climbing and might reach \$5.00 per gallon. Now we have two cars and one sits in the driveway. So now we are thinking seriously about selling the car that is paid off and paying down the loan on the other car. I am also thinking seriously of buying a bicycle and gearing up to commute on a bicycle to work. This will help me get in shape as well as help keep the environment clean.

So . . . In a matter of a few months we went from three vehicles down to (most likely) one vehicle and riding bicycles. We are sick and tired of the prices (fuel and food) continuing to creep up and refuse to put up with it anymore.

We want to make a trip to Bend Oregon to visit our grandchildren but we cannot afford to do that this month. We will have to save another \$100 and do that at the end of next month. We all work too hard to "try" and make ends meet to have to make decisions between gasoline and grandchildren.

So maybe someone will hear our story and something can be done about this.

Thank you again for listening.

MICHAEL VISCETTO.

I strongly disagree with your stand on the climate change bill that recently was de-

feated in filibuster action recently. I was very disappointed in your vote. These are measures that need to be made for our environment, and for our economy.

Trying to open federal wildlife reserves to more drilling is not the answer. There is not enough oil there to make a difference in the world price of oil and gas. (And I say this as someone who owns lots of stock in oil, gas, and oil service industry companies.) We instead need to focus on making alternative, non-CO₂ emitting fuels. I do agree with your support for nuclear energy, solar and wind power. With the coming development of electric powered vehicles, these will greatly decrease the use of gasoline, which is the best way to bring about a price drop—which will make a climate change bill that much more important.

MITCH LONG, *Boise*.

Not sure where to begin. It is very hard for us to live right now with both the cost of fuel rising, and the cost of food rising. My husband served this country for 22 years in the Military until he became injured, and was unable to do his duties anymore as a military man. He went back to school, thanks to the VA, and is now a board certified respiratory therapist. He is still looking for a job at this point and time. I have faith he will find one soon because we live payday to payday, and there are times when we do not have enough to pay the bills we have because I went to the store, or put gas in my car. So I also have to make a choice as to put gas in the car, or go to the grocery store. But you have to have gas in the car to get to the store. Living off of potatoes, and macaroni cheese is getting old. And every where you look there are commercials telling you to eat right. How can a person eat right when you can't afford the food in the first place? Plus with all of my doctor bills and the amount of medication I am on does not help either. I struggle everyday wondering what am I going to feed my family today, and I wonder what is really going to happen to us.

TAMMY.

Rather than a story I would like to offer a suggestion. My suggestion is that Congress should put in place requirements for oil companies to begin placing hydrogen fueling options at their stations nationwide. Consumers should be offered incentives for purchasing H cell cars. Oil needs to be used as a lubricant not a pollutant.

Thank you for your efforts.

CATHY JONES.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO CARTER INDUSTRIES, INCORPORATED

• Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to Carter Industries for their recent accomplishment.

Carter Industries was recently awarded the Defense Logistics Agency's, DLA, Business Alliance Award for Outstanding Readiness Support in the Historically Underutilized Business Zone Small Business Category. This agency provides logistics support for our military as well as other non-military agencies. Carter Industries plays a very important role in the DLA's ability to provide clothing to our men and women serving domestically and abroad. Specifically, they provide coveralls for flyers and combat

vehicle crewmen, which protect them from fire related injuries. Since 1996, they have manufactured military clothing in a timely fashion have consistently been dependable for our military. Located in Olive Hill, KY, in the eastern part of my State, Carter Industries also provides valuable jobs for Kentuckians in their efforts to support our men and women in uniform.

I now ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Carter Industries for their recent achievement and commitment to our military. They deserve proper recognition for their service to our great Nation.●

TRIBUTE TO DR. ROBERT J. SMITHDAS

• Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to an inspirational New Yorker, Dr. Robert J. Smithdas, on the occasion of his retirement as Director of Community Education at the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults, HKNC, in Sands Point, LI.

At the age of four, Dr. Robert J. Smithdas contracted meningitis, which resulted in the total loss of his vision and, over a short period of time, the total loss of his hearing. After graduating Perkins School for the Blind in Watertown, MA, in 1945, he was accepted for training at the Industrial Home for the Blind, IHB, located in Brooklyn, NY, and received a fellowship to attend St. John's University in New York. He received his BA degree cum laude in 1950, and 3 years later became the first person who is deaf-blind to earn a master's degree, receiving this distinction at New York University where he specialized in vocational guidance and rehabilitation for people with disabilities. Dr. Smithdas is also the recipient of four honorary Doctoral degrees from: Gallaudet University, Western Michigan University, Mount Aloysius College and, his alma mater, St. John's.

Dr. Smithdas continued his work with important and significant contributions in the field of rehabilitation, having successively occupied important management positions at the IHB, including that of associate director of services for the deaf-blind in charge of overall client services.

Along with Helen Keller and Peter Salmon, Dr. Smithdas played a vital role in the development of legislation enacted as part of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act. The act authorized the establishment of the Helen Keller National Center, which is operated by Helen Keller Services for the Blind under an agreement with the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services.

A true "Renaissance man," Dr. Smithdas' numerous national awards include being named the Poetry Society of America's "Poet of the Year," 1960-61, "The Handicapped American of the Year," 1965, by the President's