

his convoy en route between Tikrit and Baghdad, Iraq. He has exemplified courage and strength in his service to our nation and was awarded the Purple Heart and promoted to Specialist for his bravery. He is now back in Kansas City after spending eight months in recovery at Walter Reed Hospital and continues his service in the military. He has made his family and our country proud.

Army Spc. Joel L. Bertoldie of Independence, Mo. was killed on July 18, 2003 when his vehicle ran over an explosive in Fallujah, Iraq. I was privileged to present his family with a flag flown over the Capitol in his honor, and to join them at his memorial service to pay tribute to a fine son, father and citizen. A former Truman high school student, Specialist Bertoldie served honorably in Operation Iraqi Freedom and was awarded the Purple Heart, Bronze Star, National Defense Service Ribbon and Good Conduct Medal for his valor. His spirit will live on in his son, and his memory will inspire all those whose lives he touched.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to join with my colleagues to praise these heroic soldiers and the sacrifices they have made. God bless them and God bless our Nation.

Mr. MATHESON. Mr. Speaker, Memorial Day is our opportunity, as a nation, to pause and pay tribute to the millions of Americans who gave their lives for this country. We enjoy our freedom and prosperity because we are citizens of a nation that believes in service, dedication, and honor. We believe in liberty and our men and women have always willingly stepped up when called upon in defense of freedom.

This year, the Memorial Day weekend celebration on the National Mall will specifically honor America's World War II generation. The National World War II Memorial, which was authorized by Congress in 1993 in memory of those who served and died in World War II, will be dedicated in Washington, D.C., on Saturday, May 29, 2004. Sixteen million Americans fought valiantly, far from home, to protect not just our nation, but the entire world.

More than 400,000 Americans died during this war. Thousands more gave their lives during subsequent wars in Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, and most recently in Afghanistan and Iraq.

I would also like to take a moment to give my thanks to the soldiers from my home state of Utah. Over the past few years, nearly four thousand Utahns from the National Guard and Reserves, were sent into harm's way in the Middle East, or supported those on the front lines. I am so proud of these men and women—from the Wasatch Front, from St. George, Vernal, Cedar City, and other cities. I am proud of their commitment, grateful for their service, and deeply sorry for the families of those who won't be returning home.

God bless this Nation, and the men and women who serve so valiantly and with honor.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. RYAN of Ohio addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BACHUS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BLUMENAUER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CONCERNING THE VICE PRESIDENT'S ENERGY TASK FORCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I want to express my concern this evening over Vice President CHENEY's abusing his power as Vice President to continue to keep secret documents that could significantly impact our Nation's future energy policy and the effect the Bush administration's energy policies are having on American families and on our economy.

Mr. Speaker, almost immediately after entering office, Vice President CHENEY took it upon himself to convene what would later be called the energy task force. The unnamed participants of this secret task force came together to advise the Bush administration on energy policy and develop what would become the administration's official energy plan. However, in the 3 years since the energy task force released its report, the Vice President has done everything he can to keep the records and participants of the task force secret. This task force played a critical role in developing a major policy initiative with a direct impact on everything from our economy to our environment. Still, the Vice President has refused to let the American people know who made up this energy task force or how and why the task force came to the conclusions that it did.

I am going to get back to this in a minute, but first I want to address the rise in gas prices which I think ultimately is related to the issue of the energy task force.

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Earlier today, I heard the argument that if Congress passes the energy bill devised by the secret Cheney task force, consumers would be alleviated from the high gasoline prices we are

witnessing across the country. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that not only is this argument foolish, but it is also wrong. The Republican-passed energy bill would do nothing to address the rising cost of gasoline; and, in fact, the bill has provisions that would make gasoline even more expensive.

In fact, a study released in February by the Energy Information Administration found that the provisions in the energy bill would have only a negligible effect on energy production, consumption, and prices; but that negligible effect would be far outweighed by a provision requiring the use of ethanol. The report concluded that such a provision would actually increase the average gasoline price by 3 cents per gallon and the price for reformulated gasoline by an average of 8.1 cents. So the study concludes that provisions in the Republican energy bill would actually increase gas prices, and I certainly know that my constituents would not like to see that happen, particularly as we now move into the Memorial Day week.

What President Bush and his administration do not understand is that high gas prices impact all of us, consumers and businesses alike. Gasoline prices have increased 38 percent since December 2003, with the average price for a gallon of regular unleaded at just over \$2. High fuel costs translate into a loss of profit margins for the manufacturing and transportation sectors that force prices for products and services higher, hitting American consumers twice. Not only do Americans need to dole out more cash to fill their gas tanks with the little disposable income that they have left; they are strangled by rising health care costs, higher education costs, and now higher costs in goods and services.

I just want to give some stories from struggling Americans that show that the hardships are being felt from coast to coast. I quote first DeAnn from Salt Lake City, Utah, who writes: "My husband and I own a small trucking company. Due to the rise in fuel, we have let three drivers go and sold the trucks and trailers. This was very hard to do, but in an effort to keep the other two drivers working, we had to. I know of two other small companies that are doing the same, and the burden is just too much."

I have another letter from Sara, who lives in Virginia Beach, Virginia, and she writes: "As a military family, the rising gas prices are taking a big chunk of our disposable income. We have two small fuel-efficient cars, thankfully, but our cost to fill up our cars is easily \$10 more every time. Unfortunately, we will not be driving much this summer because of it. I really wish the President would take more of an interest in the problems of middle working-class families like ours."

Not only does Sara think, Mr. Speaker, that President Bush does not care about the impact that gasoline prices have on Americans, but another gentleman, Jon Meade Huntsman, who is