

*It costs me so much money in gas that my wife and I live on \$6 per day to eat.*

My job was transferred to China 8 years ago. No jobs were available in my field. I tried to do everything I possibly could do in finding another job outside of my field but failed. My unemployment ran out. I lost everything: House, cars and the will to live. My wife and I moved into my in-law's basement after this catastrophe. I regained my never-give-up outlook on life. I went back to school. I spent \$13,000 on my education to become a residential home inspector. That market is in turmoil, and I can't make any money in it these days. I am still self-employed now performing various inspections on the commercial side within the northern half of Illinois. I drive on average 250 miles per day. It costs me so much money in gas that my wife and I live on \$6 per day to eat. I can't afford health insurance for my wife and I because that money is in the gas tank every week. The irony of it is my wife is a nurse. She's expecting the doctor she works with to close his office any day now because he's behind in his malpractice insurance. His premiums are too high and he's 120 days past due on his office lease payments because he's trying to keep the malpractice insurance in effect. He stopped offering health insurance to his employees 2 years ago with his increasing costs. I still live in a basement. Do you need any more evidence that our country and our leaders have failed me?

*How much more of a hit can people take? The future looks extremely bleak to me.*

Bernie, I am so frightened for next year, as I struggle daily this year. I drive past the gas stations and see the price go up. Those prices are going up even 10 cents a gallon in one day.

What about heating fuel next year? I spent this winter with my heat turned down to 53 degrees, varying it only for a few hours after I returned home from work. I have my master's degree and am a teacher. I am struggling so hard in my new home. It's a double wide and I've waited 50 years to get my own home. Now, I am worried I won't be able to keep it as everything else is going up, except my salary, which next year will only go up slightly more than 1 percent.

The middle class is no longer the middle class...I've slipped into the lower class after a winter of double heating costs and now these new economic hits. How much more of a hit can people take? The future looks extremely bleak to me. I worry constantly about how I am going to pay my bills.

The first letter is from a young person in a small, rural, college town in Vermont. The second was written by a woman who lives in a city on the Gulf Coast of Florida.

*I am now living out of my car.*

As a student and a part time employee working for just above minimum wage I have found it more and more difficult to survive under these conditions. The drive to school and work require me to use roughly 30 percent of my paycheck just to go where I need to, to make it through my day.

When school is in session I am lucky to get about 170 dollars a week and with gas prices at their current all time high I am continually finding myself under hardships because of it. Recently I had to vacate my apartment because I could not afford to pay rent and I am now living out of my car. This too seems like it may not be able to last that much longer because I am encountering difficulties in making my car payment.

I can remember when gas prices were a little over a dollar and I dream about life taking that turn once more. Because of the gas prices I have found nothing but an extremely low budget for food, I was forced out of my

home and now I might lose the one thing that is allowing me to continue my schooling and keep going to work—my car.

I am struggling to understand why prices continue to rise and I see no end in sight.

*Our life style has drastically changed in the past 12 months.*

I travel over 30 miles one way (60 miles roundtrip). My car requires high test which is now \$3.95/gal. I have approached my company about doing a survey of its employees to see how many co-workers travel over 20 miles one way, and suggested that we start to work on a commuter policy. I suggested four 10-hour work days, telecommuting, setting up car pools, setting up incentives for car poolers. I was turned down. I was able to find another person who was interested in car pooling & we have started to do that. I take breakfast, coffee, lunch, and snacks to work daily. I do not go to the hair dresser or nail salon as I used to. We stopped taking weekend trips and plan to see our children in NJ only once this year. Between the 30 percent credit card interest rates, fuel cost, and food increases our life style has drastically changed in the past 12 months.

Two women from Vermont write about what the economy is doing to them and their families.

*My mortgage is behind, we are at risk for foreclosure, and I can't keep up with my car payments.*

I am a 31 year old wife, mother of two. How has this affected me? My husband drives 35 miles to work, that is a one-way trip. He is putting an average of \$80 a week into his gas tank. No, he doesn't drive an SUV or a half-ton work truck. It's a small pickup truck that he needs as he builds houses. The kicker is that he never puts more than half a tank in, because we can't afford to fill it. I drive 15 miles one way, and put about \$40 a week into my 30-miles-to-the-gallon car. Again, I never fill the tank—ever. We have even contemplated having my husband quit his job because he isn't making much more money weekly than he spends on gas. We could move to an area that is closer to our jobs, but because of the market, we cannot sell our house fast enough, or for a fair price.

Meanwhile, my mortgage is behind, we are at risk for foreclosure, and I can't keep up with my car payments. My parents, both in their 60's, are back to work so that they can make ends meet, and struggle to come up with enough gas money so they can get to doctor's appointments. They are opting to close their house up for the winter, and stay with my uncle so they don't have to put oil in their furnace. I can't tell you how many times we had to fill our little gas tanks with kerosene or diesel because we ran out of oil and couldn't afford the \$380 it would cost us to put a mere 100 gallons in. Needless to say, we are way behind on all of our bills, we are still playing catch up with our winter expenses. People that I know that have never struggled with money, are now frequenting our local food shelf so they can feed their families staple foods. Please listen to our pleas and put ethics first.

*We are barely staying afloat.*

My family has been hit so hard by this economy, we are barely staying afloat. We have remortgaged the house 4 times in the last three years to pay credit card debt. Now we are trying to tap into our annuity to pay more credit card debt. The debts on the credit cards are all for bills. Mostly grocery, oil and the mere cost of living.

My husband is a union carpenter and they just changed our fantastic insurance plan to a terrible one with barely any coverage. I have none of my doctors on it and I suffer from painful nerve damage. I am not eligible

for social security disability and I am unable to work.

We had a dream to own our own home, and that dream came true seven years ago. I am afraid our dream is slipping through our fingers and it won't be long before we lose our home, the way things are going.

A young couple in Burlington, Vermont writes of their situation and their concerns.

*I wonder some times if we should try to follow our dreams—decide to have children?*

Even after we bought our house, there was a time when I could save a little here and there and feel secure and hopeful for the future.

Recently, I have been trying to stretch out time between grocery trips and have chosen to postpone necessary repairs to our house simply because we just don't have the money to do so.

We are frugal people with simple spending habits, mainly food and our house expenses. We ride bicycles, buy bulk foods and used clothing, repair and mend before buying new, and we love this life.

But if we can't fix our roof, or become malnourished from food choices on a family income of \$50,000 yr, then what does the future hold for the next generation?

I wonder some times if we should try to follow our dreams—decide to have children? Try to buy a farm? All of these thoughts lead me to another emotion—sadness.

These letters, the first from a single mother in Vermont, the second from a retired couple also in Vermont, ask questions that we as a Nation should listen to.

*People say, 'Cut back.'*

I am a single mother, owning a home, preparing to send a son to college, and working two jobs most of the time. While I am managing to keep my house (I think I'm upside down given the slump in market value), I am falling behind on my bills and have to use my credit card more often for necessities.

*People say, 'Cut back.'*

When I look at my bank and credit card statements, I see; gas, groceries, gas, fuel oil, gas, groceries, school-related activities, car maintenance, gas, electricity. Cut back on what? The occasional pizza between jobs and athletic events? The trip to college to seek financial aid? Clothes for work and school?

*Does anybody have a solution? Does anybody in Washington care?*

Thanks for your invitation to talk with you. We are retired, 70 and 65 and living on Social Security and some savings.

Like most Vermonters we use wood to offset the price of being warm. Our last oil fill up was nearly \$700. How can we continue to make ends meet? My gasoline cost \$239 last month. Food and everything else we buy is going up every week because of gouging from oil companies. We are worried about the national debt and the trade deficit. What can be done to bring them down? Does anybody have a solution? Does anybody in Washington care?

#### HONORING RON MASON

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I, along with my Michigan colleague, Senator STABENOW, would like to congratulate Ron Mason on a long and distinguished career at Michigan State University. He has been integral to the success of Michigan State's hockey program for more than 29 years and has positively impacted the lives of many young people throughout his tenure at MSU.

Ron Mason enjoys the distinction of being the winningest coach in college

hockey history. That is an impressive feat, one of which he, his family and the MSU community are proud. Ron spent 36 years as a college hockey head coach, 23 of which were behind the bench at Michigan State University. During his stellar career, he amassed 924 total wins and a record of 635-270-69 as head coach of the Spartans. Ron guided the Spartans to 17 CCHA regular season and playoff titles, and 23 appearances in the NCAA tournament, which stands as an all-time record. In 1986, he led the Spartans to their second NCAA Hockey National Championship in the school's history, and in 1972, he won a NAIA Championship as head coach of Lake Superior State University.

After retiring as head coach of the Spartans, Ron accepted the job of athletic director at Michigan State, where he would continue to make important contributions to the success of the 25-sport athletic department. Under his watch, the university won 11 conference championships and one national championship. Fittingly, the national championship was won by the ice hockey team, the program's third NCAA national championship. Ron's legacy as athletic director also includes the many contributions he has made in the lives of student-athletes at MSU off the field. These efforts include the PACT initiative which has enabled more than 300 student-athletes to participate in community outreach efforts, the establishment of the Student-Athlete Multicultural Center which provides leadership training to student-athletes, and his highly successful fundraising efforts for the athletic department.

One of the great privileges of coaching and working on the collegiate level is the impact an individual can have in shaping the lives of young men and women. Ron Mason accepted this responsibility and flourished. In the process, he has become an important figure in MSU's rich athletic tradition.

Ron's retirement will be aptly marked by a celebration on Thursday, June 12 at MSU. We know our Senate colleagues join us in paying tribute to Ron Mason on his many accomplishments over the years and wish him and his family the very best in their future endeavors.

#### IN REMEMBRANCE OF ALFRED WAGONER LOVELESS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Alfred Wagoner Loveless, a tireless and dedicated community leader. Alfred was committed to serving the needs of his community and served in various positions throughout his adult life in Saginaw. His contributions were many, and he will be missed by those whose lives he touched.

Alfred Wagoner Loveless was born in Detroit, MI, on March 9, 1931, to Claude and Jesse Starr Loveless and moved shortly thereafter to Saginaw. He is a

graduate of Saginaw High School. During his years at Saginaw High, he excelled athletically and would ultimately set several school records in track and field. After his high school years, Alfred attended Bay City Junior College and Bishop College.

Alfred Wagoner Loveless was a man of great faith who was devoted to his family and to his community, and he received numerous awards and recognitions throughout his life as a result of his work. His community efforts focused on eradicating poverty, sickle cell prevention, along with promoting self-determination and self-sufficiency. Alfred is mourned by his family, the members of Zion Baptist Church, and many in the greater Saginaw community. Alfred is survived by his wife Gloria Hill Loveless and his son, Wagoner T. Loveless, in addition to a large extended family.

This is, indeed, a great loss to all who knew him or for those who have benefited from his work. I know my colleagues will join me in paying tribute to the life and work of Alfred Wagoner Loveless. I am sure his family takes comfort in knowing that his legacy will be remembered.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### REMEMBERING WILLIAM T. "BILL" McLAUGHLIN

• Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I wish today to honor Bill McLaughlin, a man as renowned for his vision and leadership as for his soft touch and utter humanity. Bill passed away on May 30, 2008, but his legacy will live on for generations. Many remember Bill as a man who turned the city of Wilmington into one of the financial capitals of the world—I prefer to honor him as the truly decent, caring, and visionary gentleman whom I have admired for my entire career.

To summarize Bill McLaughlin's life in a few words is beyond my capabilities. It is impossible for me to speak of this brother, father, and grandfather in terms of his well-documented public accomplishments. To me, Bill McLaughlin was a friend, and a man.

As Shakespeare wrote, "His life was gentle, and the elements / So mixed in him that Nature might stand up / And say to all the world, / This was a man!"

Bill McLaughlin was a man. As we Irish say when we want to pay the highest compliment: Bill McLaughlin was a good man.

Bill was, at his core, a family man. He viewed everything through the prism of family. And he was a great city leader because he loved the city of Wilmington. On any given Sunday, you were as likely to see him at an African-American church as you were at Catholic mass.

Of all Bill's wonderful qualities, perhaps the most unique—and most useful—was his style of leadership. He had the insight to know what had to be

done and the wisdom to make other people think it was their idea.

He was one of the last men and women of the "greatest generation," recognizing that the values he was raised with—honor, decency, humility and sacrifice—were universal values that defined who we are as a nation. He used those ideals as his guidance, which is why Bill's courageous decisions as an elected official were both profound and simple for him. They were not difficult for him because they were obvious to him; Bill always knew his true north.

Bill McLaughlin was a model for all of us, not just elected officials. He lived his life, from beginning to end, by the same guiding principles upon which our Nation is built. Bill will be sorely missed, but as long as we remember his lessons, the world will be better off. As Yeats wrote in "The Lake Isle of Innisfree:"

I will arise and go now, for always night and day

I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;

While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,

I hear it in the deep heart's core.●

##### HONORING DR. DONALD F. AVERILL

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Dr. Donald F. Averill as he retires after almost 50 years of service in education.

This month, Dr. Donald Averill will retire as chancellor of the San Bernardino Community College District, SBCCD. Prior to joining SBCCD, Dr. Averill served as the CEO of Palo Verde College. Dr. Averill more than doubled the enrollment of full-time students to provide increased educational opportunities throughout the region. His leadership enabled physical and economic growth of academic infrastructure and enabled Palo Verde College to earn accreditation. During his tenure as the CEO for the San Bernardino Community College District, he greatly improved the economic capacities of the district and increased cooperation between colleges and secondary institutions, increasing enrollment in the region by 45 percent.

Throughout his 47 years of service and commitment to improvements in education, Dr. Donald Averill provided leadership both in California higher education and in the San Bernardino community. He served as chairman of the Economic and Workforce Development Advisory Committee to the California Community College Board of Governors for 2 years and chaired the Human Resources Commission of the Association of California Community College Administrators for 5 years. He served the city of La Habra, CA, as a planning commissioner for 12 years. Dr. Averill has also served as president of the American Heart Association in Glendale, CA.