

food, water, medical services, and sanitation facilities. Despite the numerous credible reports coming out of the region, the Ethiopian Government has denied that such violations may be occurring and has refused to even investigate these allegations and/or permit independent assessments of conditions in the region. Such stonewalling only further undermines the rule of law and the Government's obligation to protect its civilian population.

The aid organizations now struggling to keep these Ethiopian civilians alive, as well as national and international human rights defenders, democracy advocates, independent journalists, and humanitarian organizations seeking to consolidate and extend peace, democracy, and development in Ethiopia, are already facing cumbersome bureaucratic rules and sometime succumb to self-censorship to avoid Government reprisals. The Ethiopian Government's new law, if passed in its current format, would make it almost impossible for these groups and individuals to continue their important efforts. Under the Charities and Societies Proclamation, non-Ethiopian organizations would be prohibited from engaging in democracy, human rights, good governance, or conflict resolution activities, and national civil society groups would have to forgo foreign funding and submit to strict Government regulation.

To reaffirm and facilitate Ethiopia's commitment to and progress towards democratic development, eliminating extremism, good governance, combating HIV/AIDS, improving agricultural productivity, and reducing chronic hunger, the U.S. Government has provided billions of dollars worth of assistance in recent years with more than \$700 million already in fiscal year 2008. The majority of this support is delivered through U.S.-based nongovernmental organizations that offer essential services and supplies to civilians as well as valuable technical assistance and resources to strengthen Ethiopian institutions and infrastructure. The new restrictions and regulations would severely limit or even prohibit much of this assistance and should cause the United States as well as other international donors to reconsider whether contributions to Ethiopia can further democracy, development and accountability.

The Ethiopian Government claims the new regulations are aimed at improving the accountability and transparency of civil society organizations operating in Ethiopia. But what the provisions would actually do is erode the Government's own accountability and transparency by impeding these organizations' ability to serve their essential watchdog functions. This is not the time or place for tighter controls. Instead, the Ethiopian Government should support improvements in the quality and capacity of these groups, which are vital to the country's continued political, economic, and social development.

The United States needs to work with our partners—both on the continent and off it—and strongly oppose the imposition of this new proclamation to protect the gains Ethiopia has made in recent years and pave the way for further consolidation of growth and democracy. If passed in its current format, this bill would have a devastating impact on our foreign policy objectives and Ethiopia's development as a robust democracy. And, even if revised and amended, passage of this bill would still send a negative message, that of a government desperately seeking to hold on to power and dismantle any groups that might expose its failures or limitations. We must stand with the people of Ethiopia and with the principles that Americans hold dear.

WORLD REFUGEE DAY

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, today, on World Refugee Day, we recognize the millions of innocent people who are living as refugees due to violence, unrest, and natural disasters. Each day, refugees struggle to survive in an unstable environment where they are often unable to further their education, make a living for themselves, or obtain adequate health care.

The struggles refugees face are unimaginable. Being forced to flee your home, often to encounter precarious, crowded living conditions in a strange place, is particularly treacherous for women, given the pervasive problems of sexual abuse, beatings, and sometimes torture. Displaced people who make it to refugee camps have often already survived extremely difficult situations as they cling to the hope that they will one day be able to return to their homes.

Protracted conflicts and humanitarian crises increase instability and negatively impact the livelihoods of refugees we have seen this in countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, eastern Chad, Jordan, and Syria. In each of these countries and in many other places around the world, national and international nongovernmental organizations confront challenging circumstances to meet the basic needs of refugees and protect their human rights. The international community and host governments must make it a priority to ensure support and access for these groups so that they can serve vulnerable refugee populations. Every time a refugee dies from an easily preventable disease or from living in unsanitary conditions, we are failing to live up to our collective responsibility.

But we cannot accept disaster response as the only option. We must be working harder to create systems that anticipate and prevent conflicts from arising so we can stop mass displacement before it even begins. We need to use all our resources to prevent such crises from occurring.

As we recognize World Refugee Day, we acknowledge the strength and sur-

vival of refugees, and we commit not just today, but every day, to work towards creating a world where governments fulfill their basic responsibility to protect their citizens.

BOY SCOUTS AT THE LITTLE SIOUX SCOUT RANCH

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I wish to honor the Boy Scouts who recently lost their lives at the Little Sioux Scout Ranch in Iowa. As the Midwest continues to experience devastating storms that have shocked us all, I would like to take time to remember four young boys from that area who were recently laid to rest. Josh Fennen, Sam Thomsen, Ben Petrzilka, and Aaron Eilerts were all Boy Scouts of America. These young men were remembered as boys who were loved by their families, on their way to becoming young men, and above all Scouts. As an Eagle Scout myself, I share a deep connection with these boys from Iowa and Nebraska, along with all Scouts throughout America. The path to becoming an Eagle is much like the path our future leaders should take, and although the lives of these four young boys were ended abruptly, they were on that path.

As I recall the Scout motto of "Be Prepared," I can't help but to think of the emergency drill these Scouts practiced the day before the tornado or how the Scouts moved swiftly to assist with their first-aid skills the 48 who were injured. The Scouting community has suffered a great loss. My thoughts and prayers go out to the families, friends, and Scouts whose lives were touched by these four boys.

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL GREGG P. OLSON

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to Col. Gregg Olson, USMC, who will complete his 2 year tour of duty with the United States Marine Corps' Office of Legislative Affairs on June 24, 2008. I have had the pleasure to work with Colonel Olson on many occasions. In his role as the Director of the Marine Corps' Senate Liaison Office, he has provided superb support, acting as the principal conduit for information between the Marine Corps and many members of the Senate. His affable personality and attention to duty contributed to a highly successful relationship between the United States Senate and the United States Marine Corps. Though he will continue his service to the Marine Corps and the country, he will be sorely missed.

A native of Rhode Island, Colonel Olson attended the United States Naval Academy, and received a commission as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps in 1985. His career as a Marine officer has been exemplary, serving with distinction in every post he has been assigned. Prior to his assignment to the United States Senate, he served two tours in Iraq,

first as an Operations Officer to a Marine Expeditionary Unit in 2003, and then as a Battalion Commander in Fallujah, Iraq in 2004. His battalion was involved in the Battle of Fallujah, which saw some of the most intense house-to-house fighting of the war. Many proud Marines under his command gave their lives in that battle.

Over the past 24 months, his unselfish devotion to duty, exceptional performance, and outstanding professionalism have translated into invaluable service to the Senate. He has advised Members and Senate staff members on matters of great importance to the United States Marine Corps. In the fluid nature of the legislative cycle, he distinguished himself by establishing and developing great working relationships with Senators and their staffs. He responded to thousands of congressional inquiries, ranging from such sensitive issues as notification of combat casualties, to providing timely information on the operations and budget of the Marine Corps.

He also planned and executed approximately 15 international congressional delegations. I had the pleasure of traveling on several of these congressional delegations with Colonel Olson. His acumen for social interaction carried over into Colonel Olson's ability to represent his service at numerous Marine Corps and Joint Service social events on Capitol Hill. Among others, these events included the Marine Corps Birthday Commemoration, the Joint Services Reception, and several Marine Corps fall and spring receptions—all important events that enabled me and my Senate colleagues to maintain close relationships with the Marine Corps' senior leadership.

On behalf of the Senate, I thank Colonel Olson for his continued service to the Nation and the United States Marine Corps, and I thank his wife, Dawn, for her steadfast support while he fulfilled this essential duty. As Gregg departs the Senate to assume command of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit at Camp Pendleton, CA, we in the U.S. Senate wish him all the best.

HONORING TROOPER DAVID SHAWN BLANTON, JR.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the life of North Carolina State Trooper David Shawn Blanton, Jr., who was tragically killed on June 18 during a routine traffic stop near Canton, NC. David is the 59th North Carolina State Trooper to have been killed in the line of duty.

David was only 24 years old and was a 2-year veteran of the North Carolina Highway Patrol. He was a native of Sylva, NC, and a 2002 graduate of Smoky Mountain High School where he was a football and wrestling star.

We are all grateful for David's dedication to protecting the citizens of North Carolina. He lived in Cherokee with his wife Michaela, who had just

given birth to their son Tye 2 weeks ago.

David was a member of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indian Tribe and the first member of that tribe to serve with the Highway Patrol. In addition to being a State trooper, David volunteered as the Junior Varsity softball coach at Smoky Mountain High School.

Along with his wife Michaela and son Tye, David is survived by his father, David S. Blanton, Sr., mother, Jennifer Blanton, and younger brother, Jesse Blanton.

David's friends, family, fellow troopers, and the people of North Carolina are mourning this very tragic loss.

I know there are no words I can offer to help comfort Michaela and other members of the Blanton family, but I hope my colleagues in the Senate will join me in keeping them in our thoughts and prayers.

David gave his life in service to our State, and this ultimate sacrifice should never be forgotten.

I send my deepest condolences to all who had the privilege of knowing this young man who gave his life in service to our State.

IDAHOANS SPEAK OUT ON HIGH ENERGY PRICES

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, earlier this week, I asked Idahoans to share with me how high energy prices are affecting their lives, and they responded by the hundreds. The stories, now numbering over 1,000, are heartbreaking and touching. To respect their efforts, I am submitting every e-mail sent to me through energy_prices@crapo.senate.gov 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 printed in the RECORD today's letters.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

SENATOR CRAPO: We are not going to be able to take any time to enjoy our great state of Idaho this summer as with years past. The gas to go and return from our favorite spots like Stanley basin, Warm Lake, McCall's Ponderosa State Park is just too much to make it enjoyable. The cost of food clearly is reflective of the fuel pricing. This just makes it far too expensive to go anywhere this summer. I am absolutely disgusted in the way our government is allowing this to happen to the American people.

I look forward to a movement to begin re-commissioning our own drilling rigs that still sit idle in the Gulf of Mexico.

I look forward to a movement to begin drilling on our own land for oil that we all know is right under our own borders.

I look forward to a movement to release and discontinue the excessive storage of emergency fuels.

I also know that I am not alone in monitoring the existing administration who will not lobby for these items I list to be addressed and resolved. It is time we start taking care of our own with our own resources. This includes limiting the impacts on the greater population by the loud concerns of a few groups. With today's technology we can certainly drill and protect our environment and begin to reduce greatly our dependence on foreign oil(s).

Respectfully,

BILL, Boise.

DEAR SENATOR CRAPO: As one of those who voted for you I am pleased to provide a bit of input on the costs of fuel and the impact on myself, my family, and my business.

Just like the majority of Idaho families, our family has been directly impacted by the very high prices of gasoline and the way it happened . . . so quickly and without relieve or real alternatives.

In my business, I must have a good supply of gasoline in order to function. I operate a flight training school for pilots in Nampa. My costs for fuel are always around \$10,000 per year and that is normally my one major expense associated with my business outside of the other normal overhead costs any other business has. Even so, it is the Numero Uno cost for my business, and now it is about 50% increased from that already very high price. What compounds this loss is that so many people have become too financially short that my customer base is very low now.

Normally, in the past 7 years, I would be looking at a full student schedule, with at least 3 or 4 on a waiting list. This year, I have a 20% load and no waiting list. It is that sparse due to the economy, then compounded by the very high fuel costs.

Thanks for the opportunity to provide some direct input on the subject to your office.

Sincerely yours,

GARY, Nampa.

DEAR SENATOR: The biggest impact that gas prices has had on me affects our family. We have six married children and one single daughter spread throughout the west. One in Colorado Springs, CO; another in Mesa, AZ; two in the Orem, UT, area; another in dental school at Marquette; and two in the Boise area. We plan a family reunion every summer, which is usually our once-a-year gathering. We have cancelled our reunion this year, scheduled for Colorado Springs, CO, because of the cost of fuel for everyone. I just can't tell you how disappointing it is to all of us not to have an opportunity to be together this year. We hope that it will not stop us next year.

I hear all of the reports that America has ample supplies but legislation and environmentalists prevent us from developing the natural resources. We are too late for today, but tomorrow will be here and we need to be prepared to provide for ourselves. All that you can do to make this possible is needed and necessary. Please do your best to make it happen.

DOUG.

PLEASE pass emergency legislation to exploit America's natural resources. Authorize drilling wherever oil companies think there might be oil or natural gas, authorize nuclear energy and wind power. Set up drilling stations off America's shores instead of letting Cuba and China take our oil. Show some resolve and Yankee ingenuity!

Americans will downsize and conserve—the market will take care of that, but you should have had us energy independent years ago. We could be sending money to America instead of supporting people who do not have our country's best interest at heart.