

at home that will save consumers money.

We also have to invest in education so our children can compete in this global economy. Senator MENENDEZ talked about that very eloquently a little while ago when he talked about his experiences.

I am one of those kids, too, who, without a public system of higher education, would not have been able to go to college. That is why I am pleased the budget resolution we are considering expands opportunities for students to go to college—to go to college and to graduate—because it increases Pell grants to \$5,550 per student and provides education tax incentives for families.

This budget also recognizes the critical importance of the early years in a child's life by providing significant support for early childhood education and title I programs. The long-term strength of our economy is dependent on each of these issues—education, health care, and energy policy. We need to act now to make critical investments to stimulate the economy in the short term. But we also have to do this in a fiscally responsible way that puts us on a path toward reducing our deficit. The budget deficit has been growing for 8 years. This President and this Congress inherited a debt and deficit that are at record highs. We are not going to erase these deficits and debt overnight. But we can work toward significantly cutting the deficit over the next few years. The budget that has been laid out by Senator CONRAD and the Budget Committee puts us on an aggressive course toward a balanced budget.

Spending nearly doubled under the previous administration, and revenues have now fallen to the lowest level as a share of our economy since 1950. The Obama administration inherited these record deficits and a national debt that doubled during the 8 years of the Bush administration.

This Congress, this President, and this budget are reversing course and putting our country back on a path to a balanced budget. This budget cuts the deficit by two-thirds by 2014. At the same time, it makes wise investments that will lead to economic growth in the future.

As a former Governor, I understand how important and difficult it is to balance the budget. It takes a lot of hard work, patience, and compromise.

I never expected the New Hampshire State Legislature to rubberstamp my budget when I submitted it. I knew it would change to reflect the interests and priorities of legislators, and that is exactly what is happening in Congress. But I also understand this Congress is going to send a budget back to the President that I believe will contain those priorities that the President supports and that we support as Members of Congress.

Mr. President, I also want to speak about an amendment I intend to offer

this week. My amendment is No. 776. It is simple and straightforward. It would establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to monitor FHA-approved loans. We have to remember that one of the things that got us into this economic mess is what happened in the housing market. Unfortunately, we need to make sure that doesn't continue to happen going forward.

The Federal Housing Administration is playing an increasingly critical role in promoting home ownership during these tough economic times. The FHA now insures about one-third of all new mortgages.

In the runup to the subprime crisis, many fraudulent lenders pushed borrowers into mortgages and refinancing that they could not afford just to collect commissions and fees. We need to make sure we prevent that from migrating now to federally insured loans, which would put taxpayers at risk of footing the bill for another bailout.

The amendment I am going to offer addresses the need for HUD—Housing and Urban Development—to be able to properly investigate and remove fraudulent lenders from the program whenever they deem it appropriate.

As I said, I am confident that we will be able to pass a budget that invests in the future of America. I am hopeful all of our colleagues will join in that effort because I think it is important to strengthen the middle class, restore fiscal discipline, and make the investments that we need to make to ensure that this country is going to continue to be strong and competitive in the future.

I urge my colleagues to support the 2010 budget resolution, and I hope they will also support the amendment I am offering to address potential fraud in the FHA housing market.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

STAFF SERGEANT TIMOTHY BOWLES

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. President, on March 15, Air Force SSG Timothy Bowles decided to help a fellow soldier. A friend was scheduled to

visit a school near Kot, Afghanistan, as part of his provincial reconstruction duties, but he was feeling sick. Timothy offered to take his place.

He never returned from that trip. Timothy Bowles was killed when his vehicle was destroyed by a roadside bomb. He was 24.

We all celebrate the remarkable bravery of our men and women in uniform. But Timothy was not just a brave soldier; he was a deeply kind and caring man. He displayed not just the martial virtues of the soldier, but the simple kindness that we all hope to find in our friends, our families, our fellow citizens.

Timothy grew up in the Air Force. His dad, Air Force Msgt Louis Bowles, fought in the first gulf war. As a child, Timothy moved from base to base while his dad served our country. He knew the hardships that the military can bring. But when he turned 18, he quickly signed up to serve.

We tend to think of that decision as one of physical bravery. Every soldier accepts the risk of injury or death. They commit themselves to challenges that many Americans will never know. And they put in the effort that will transform them from civilians into soldiers—the effort that makes the U.S. military the finest fighting force in the world.

But the decision to become a soldier is also an extension of values that we all share. It is the act of a good neighbor pledging to help keep the neighborhood safe. Of a good father telling his family they can count on him. Of a good citizen who puts his community before himself.

Please join me in honoring Timothy Bowles and extending our sympathies to his father Louis, his mother Lisa, his sister Heather, and all of the Bowles family.

Timothy was a good soldier and a good friend—to his fellow soldiers, and to all of us.

AMERICAN RED CROSS MONTH

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, "America the Beautiful" is perhaps one of the most moving anthems that captures the very essence of our Nation. In the fourth verse, Miss Katherine Lee Bates wrote, "O beautiful for patriot dream that sees beyond the years, thine alabaster cities gleam Undimmed by human tears! America! America! God shed his grace on thee and crown thy good with brotherhood from sea to shining sea!" From the inception of our Nation, the strength of America has been our unwavering sense of honor, an unshakable belief that we are all created equal "under God" and our unrestrained sense of global humanity.

This is the embodiment of the American Red Cross and of the vision articulated by Clara Barton, founder of this wonderful organization that has helped countless individuals in times of crisis whether comforting a wounded soldier during battle, assisting those who are

recovering from a natural disaster, or administering life-saving blood to a sick patient. It is indeed the legacy of this organization to go and serve those in most need—even to the endangerment of the volunteer. Clara Barton once elaborated on importance of service to others, “I may be compelled to face danger, but never fear it, and while our soldiers can stand and fight, I can stand and feed and nurse them.” Though the focus of the Red Cross has grown over the years the tenacity to help those in need and who face grave danger has never wavered.

Since 1943, every President of the United States has proclaimed March as American Red Cross Month and in turn, the organization uses this month to promote the services provided to the public each and every day. Communities depend on the Red Cross in times of need and the Red Cross depends on the support of the public to achieve its mission.

I am pleased to join with the Red Cross and highlight the courageous work that this organization accomplishes year after year and celebrate March as American Red Cross Month. As one of the best known humanitarian organizations, the Red Cross has been at the forefront of providing aid to soldiers during times of war and peace and helping individuals and families prevent, prepare for and respond to large and small scale disasters for more than 127 years.

I am very pleased of the work that the Kansas Red Cross has achieved over the years and am especially delighted to highlight the work of the Kansas Capital Area Chapter for their involvement in the creation of the “Holiday Mail for Heroes.” This program is a partnership between the Red Cross, Pitney Bowes, and the American people. Holiday Mail for Heroes distributes holiday cards to military veterans and active duty personnel throughout the world. This past year, over 1 million cards were received and sorted by hundreds of Red Cross volunteers. Pitney Bowes boxed and shipped them to different distribution sites—the Kansas Capital Area Chapter being one of them—and I am proud to report, shipped more than 1,000 cards.

In addition, to the focus on veterans, the Red Cross also provides programs that promote health and safety services as well. These vital services help to save lives and strengthen communities through education, training and products that enable people to prevent, prepare for and respond to disasters and other life-threatening emergencies. I know that I am profoundly grateful for the services that the Red Cross has given to my state during our times of challenges with natural disasters.

Last year alone, more than 5 million people took advantage of such educational opportunities, attending Red Cross first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation—CPR—and automated external defibrillation—AED—training classes. I know that I am profoundly

grateful for the services that the Red Cross has given to my State during our times of challenges with natural disasters.

Other educational programs and services include Aquatics, such as basic swimming lessons, lifeguarding and water safety, care-giving, and HIV/AIDS education.

The American Red Cross has been able to provide services because of the tireless and dedicated work of volunteers, often known as “Red Crossers.” Many of these “Red Crossers” have been involved in their communities for 10, 20 or even 80 years.

Mr. President, it is very fitting that we celebrate March as American Red Cross Month and continue to advance the principles of this very essential organization.

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:

Our family is being greatly affected by the rising energy prices, especially gasoline; we are average middle income America here and we do not have a lot of extra money to keep up with the rising gas prices. If something could be done such as more development of domestic oil, fossil fuels, nuclear research or anything else, besides depending on OPEC prices, that would be a really boon for our Nation as a whole and help with our correct recession. Have a blessed day.

BRENT and CHARLENE.

My wife Suzanne and I are Idaho natives of 33 years. We have three children who are approaching the teen years. I earn a modest income as a police officer in Caldwell. From the time of our marriage over 13 years ago until last year, Suzanne had served our family as a homemaker and educator of our children. Part of curriculum Suzanne employed involved music lessons, sports, and dance, which required many miles per week of driving from our home to each event. Even though we operate a fuel-efficient vehicle getting over 30 mpg, the transportation costs

have always been substantial. Last fall, we made the decision to enroll our children in a local charter school focusing on our children's talents in music. I am proud to say that they tested into the school a grade level above their age and have all received high honors in their first year. This is a testament to Suzanne's hard work and skill as a teacher.

Since Suzanne and I enrolled our children into school, she decided to take a part-time job in Meridian to help our income. At about the same time Suzanne entered the work force, fuel prices began to rise and have never stopped. Now we still have travel for music lessons, sports, and dance, as well as Suzanne's commute to work. Despite our efforts to conserve, Suzanne's income is completely used up and then some paying for higher fuel prices. Each year over the past 5 years or so, I have made more money, but we have had a continually harder time providing for our family's needs. I believe that this is due in large part to the price of fuel.

I hope that this recent fuel price increase will prompt the members of Congress to act and the citizens of our country not to accept less than the best solution to the problem. I am in favor of allowing the free market to solve the energy problem with innovation. I do not support the intrusion of the Federal Government with taxes and regulations. I think the ideas of windfall profits taxes for corporations' amount to no less than theft and would serve only to severely damage our Nation's long-term productivity and morale. I would like to see the following things happen ASAP and believe if implemented that they would solve the fuel shortage very soon, as well as stabilize the market for decades to come without any compromise to the environment:

Build nuclear reactors to produce a clean, long-term supply for electricity. Retire all dams on the Snake River in Idaho and Washington once nuclear reactors are online.

Lift the drilling restrictions on domestic petroleum exploration.

Allow for the construction of enough oil refineries and infrastructure to handle the projected increase in demand and oil production.

Immediately stop production and government subsidy of ethanol. It is not efficient and cannot support itself. Corn is best used for food.

Stop refining so many different grades of gasoline. Refine only 92 octane gasoline and #2 diesel fuel. This will provide fuel for all cars currently in use while increasing current refinery production capacity through consolidation.

Offer tax incentives to auto makers to produce vehicles that get good mpg (35+ for cars, 25+ for trucks). Allowing the free market to solve the problem, which they are already trying to do, is the best and quickest way to get it done.

I hope this letter finds its way to those who can help effect the change necessary to keep our country secure and prosperous. Thank you for time.

SCOTT, Middleton.

Fuel is a necessity in our country, just as milk and eggs cannot be traded in futures markets oil should not be speculated on. I work in the transportation industry. Currently, due to high fuel prices, business is poor, reducing my income. There is little or no public transportation available to me so my costs have increased dramatically in spite of my efforts to travel less. I cannot continue on this path much longer without painful sacrifices or perhaps an additional job. Meanwhile it is business as usual in Washington, [partisan arguing without any solutions from people who may be in higher