

Tax Update: Effective July 1, 2008 the standard mileage amount for the business use of your vehicle is increased from 50.5¢ per mile to 58.5¢ per mile for the remainder of 2008. In addition, the medical/moving expense mileage amount has been increased from 19¢ per mile to 27¢ per mile for the same period. The standard mileage amounts for charitable contributions remain at 14¢ per mile for 2008 since this deduction requires congressional approval for a change to be made.

We, the People

The number one topic on the minds of most Americans today is the high gas prices that we are experiencing every time we go to the pump. Over the last two years gas prices have doubled and there doesn't seem to be any end in sight of the continually climbing prices. This problem has affected every household in our country and has made effective short to medium term financial planning almost impossible with the uncertainty that exists. High gas prices coupled with this uncertainty has Wall Street reeling and is creating an economic slow down that has affected nearly every industry in this nation.

As we look to our leaders in Congress for solutions to the energy crisis we are facing, we are struck with the fact that most of them are mired in the partisan political game of looking for a scapegoat to blame for the high energy prices instead of trying to arrive at a solution to the problem.

Are you as frustrated with the way our Congress is handling the energy crisis in our country as I am? Regardless of where you stand on the energy issues, the one thing that we can all agree on is that stagnation and political posturing is not the answer to the problems seriously affecting every household in this nation today.

But what can we, as individual citizens, do to make our voices heard at this critical time?

1. Write your Congressman to express your concerns.
2. Research information sources to better educate yourself on the real causes of the energy crisis and possible solutions to reduce our dependence on foreign oil.
3. Unite with a group of people who share your concerns and petition Congress to act in the interest of the majority of the American people.

I think the thing we must remember at all times is that with our representative form of government, Congress works for us. You as an individual citizen of this great country have a right to be heard. The fact is that unless your voice is echoed by the voices of many others with the same concerns it gets very little attention. This is evidenced by the legislation that is passed that has at its root the individual interests of very powerful lobby groups in this country. For example, the reason that we are not permitted to drill for oil off our outer continental shelf, ANWR, etc. is that the voices of some powerful environmental groups have prevented us from doing so. Even though we are the most environmentally responsible nation on earth and have not had an oil spill in over 10 years (even with the powerful hurricanes of Rita and Katrina), one argument that is continually made is that drilling off the outer continental shelf would greatly pollute the oceans off our coast. However, very little if anything is said

about the fact that China (not known for being environmentally responsible) is drilling within 50 miles of the Florida Keys.

The problem we are now facing is one of supply and demand. The world's demand for oil, because of the industrialization of China and India, et al, has increased dramatically over the past few years yet the supply of oil has only increased slightly. Is this because of a decrease in the supply of available sources of oil? Unfortunately it is not. It is because a great percentage of our oil comes from OPEC countries, who have restricted the supply to the increasing demands for petroleum as a primary energy source. And until we free ourselves of the dependence on foreign oil, I'm afraid the future of higher and higher gas prices will become a reality that we will have to live with.

So am I saying that drilling for oil off our outer continental shelf is the only solution to our energy crisis? No, I'm not. I believe we need a comprehensive energy plan that encompasses every available energy resource that we have available. Technology is increasing daily to provide alternative energy sources that will help us meet our energy demands in the future and keep our environment clean. However, in the short term tapping into the available oil resources we have within our country and along our coastline would greatly increase our supply of oil and would reduce our dependence on price gouging OPEC countries. This argument has met with disagreement from opponents of this possible solution. Their argument is that drilling here would not produce any short term solutions because it would take 10 years before oil would start flowing. This argument is remarkably similar to the argument made in the 1970's for the reason not to drill domestically. Research indicates, however, that we could have oil flowing in some facilities as early as 18 months from now and that the longest it could conceivably take is 6 years to have all facilities up and running.

In addition, because oil prices are based primarily on futures contracts, the indication that an increase in our country's future oil supply should produce fairly short term results to the escalating price increases that we are currently facing.

However, as of this writing, Congress has taken a scheduled 10 day holiday instead of conscientiously examining any comprehensive solution to the current \$4.09 per gallon that we all currently experience. With economists saying that \$7.00 per gallon gas is not out of the question by year end, I believe that the time has come that we, individual citizens, need to be heard.

I have been researching avenues in which to make my voice heard. I have written all my representatives to express my concern over our current problems and I found a group of fellow citizens that share my concerns to speak to Congress.

American Solutions is a tri-partisan group of individual citizens (Republicans, Democrats, and Independents) that has been organized to send a strong message to Washington that we Americans need comprehensive solutions to our nation's problems. This organization, led by former Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich.....who was the architect of the Contract with America to bring about change in the 1990's, have penned a set of common sense goals to address the need for Real Change in the way that Washington is handling our nation's problems. These goals represent a tri-partisan effort obtained through a 6 month series of town hall meetings, polls and creative ideas with individual citizens of this country. These goals are called **THE PLATFORM OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE—A Red, White & Blue Revolution**. The platform contains every element of concern of the American people, from energy to prayer in schools.

I would encourage you to visit the American Solutions website to review the tenants of this platform to see if it expresses the concerns you have. I am convinced that our current system of politics as usual is broken and totally incapable of producing any real solutions to the problems we face in this country. I believe to effect any real solutions to the problems we face will require a ground swell of American voices who rise up and say we have had enough---Do the job we elected you to do.

In addition, American Solutions has generated a petition demanding Congress DRILL HERE, DRILL NOW as a short term solution to our dependence on foreign oil. As of this writing, over 1,235,306 citizens have signed this petition and the number is growing daily. To review the petition and other solutions being offered under THE PLATFORM OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE visit the American Solutions website by clicking on the following link: <http://www.americansolutions.com/>

While the content and the scope of this month's newsletter is contrary to my regular newsletter writings, I have become so concerned with the future financial welfare of my clients, family and friends that I felt compelled to address an issue that is at the heart of our financial security. I do not ask you to share my views; however, I do ask that you take the appropriate steps to ensure that your voice will be heard in Washington, because I still believe we are a nation of government of the people, by the people and for the people.

Til next time,

Charles W. Register, EA, CPB
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