

Senate Democratic Policy Committee Hearing

**“An Oversight Hearing on Record High Gasoline Prices
and Windfall Oil Company Profits”**

Trica Young-Williams
Silver Spring, Maryland

September 19, 2005

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Trica Young-Williams. I live in Silver Spring, Maryland and am the mother of two beautiful young children. I work as a Hearing and Vision Technician for Montgomery County School Health Services. I am here today to explain to you the very real cost that higher gas prices impose on American families — families like mine.

As a school health aide, I am able to spend the summer with my eight-year-old son and five-year-old daughter. Because I am not working, however, the summer imposes an extra financial burden on our family; for those three months, we must rely solely on the income that my husband, Grant, earns as a maintenance worker.

With the high prices at the pump, gasoline has become an extra bill that we take on each month. It's something that I have to take into account each day as I care for my family. On the warmest days I may not take my children out in the car, because I know that driving with the air conditioning will require more gas. When I do go out, I decide more carefully which routes to take, so that I can get where I need to go while using as little gas as possible. At over \$3.00 per gallon, it makes a difference.

The price of gas has also affected other decisions that I make on a day-to-day basis. I used to drive to buy groceries at the Shoppers Food Warehouse, because the prices there are slightly lower than the local Safeway. With the added price of getting there, however, I now go to the Safeway instead.

Most importantly, the added price of gas has affected how I care and provide for my children. This summer I had to choose my activities wisely when it came to taking my children out on “field trips,” due to the high gas prices. I had to take into account what it would cost to take them somewhere, as well as the price for the activity whenever we reached our destination. For example, because I thought gas prices would come down, I planned to drive my children to camp in Olney. When the prices went higher still, and the trip became too expensive, I had to really be creative in finding alternate activities that were free and stimulating to the children, like free concerts and trips to the local library. The higher gas prices had a very real effect for us.

My story is centered around my children; because I don't work in the summer, they are my job. I can only imagine how it feels for people to worry about having enough gas to get to there jobs every day. Please keep that in mind as you work on this important issue.

Thank you.