

8/11/2008 This Week in Congress

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August 11, 2008

Dear Friend,

Welcome to "This Week in Congress." I am traveling back to Washington, D.C., to join my colleagues in calling on House leaders to take up a comprehensive energy policy immediately. I hope you find this newsletter useful.

Congress Must Pass Comprehensive Energy Policy

Congress remained out of session this week despite the urgent need to pass an energy policy that addresses the situation facing Kansans. While it is important for representatives and senators to spend time in their districts and state, Congress is needed in Washington, D.C. to address high energy costs. Yet, despite my opposition both chambers have been dismissed. We must have a national energy policy that increases the supply of energy, promotes renewable and alternative fuels and encourages conservation. Americans want Congress to take action but nothing can be done until Congress is called back into session. I believe Members of Congress are ready to put partisanship aside and work together to pass much-needed energy legislation if given the opportunity.

to call Congress into emergency session to address high energy costs. [Click here](#) to read more about my thoughts on how we can address our energy needs in Kansas and across the country.

Seeking Additional Funding for Kansas Law Enforcement

I encouraged House leaders this week to provide local and state law enforcement with additional funding through the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) program. Byrne JAG funding supports a range of law enforcement efforts important to Kansas such as curbing methamphetamine trafficking, preventing crime and improving the criminal justice system. The Kansas Bureau of Investigation, the Crisis Center of Dodge City, Domestic Violence Emergency Services and Mutli-Jurisdictional Drug Task Forces are just a few of the many recipients in Kansas of Byrne JAG funding.

Many innovative and effective programs in Kansas are threatened by a 67 percent funding cut. The Byrne JAG program is one of the most important tools state and local law enforcement agencies have in fostering intergovernmental cooperation to fight meth. In many parts of Kansas, meth is the leading drug problem. Restoring funding to the Byrne JAG program will help law enforcement stamp out the spread of this destructive drug.

Touring Spirit AeroSystems

I visited Spirit AeroSystems headquarters in Wichita this week to meet with CEO Jeff Turner and tour the company's production facility. The aviation industry is very important to the Wichita and Kansas economy, providing thousands of jobs. Spirit is the world's largest supplier of commercial airplane assemblies and components. Around 11,000 Kansans are employed by Spirit in the Wichita area.

As a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Aviation, I work on legislation important to the aviation industry. Recently, I have been fighting for a fair bidding competition for the Air Force's new aerial refueling tanker. Boeing's bid was initially rejected but it was determined the competition was biased and that many errors were made. The Department of Defense is now in the process of rebidding the contract. Mr. Turner and I discussed several issues important to Spirit and other aviation companies. I appreciated the opportunity to visit and will work with Spirit and all Kansas aviation corporations to ensure their continued success. [Click here to view photos from my visit.](#)

Visiting Labette Community College

On Monday, I visited Labette Community College (LCC) in Parsons to visit with administrators and tour campus facilities. I am a member of the House of Representatives Community College Caucus, which promotes issues important to community colleges and their students. Community colleges are an important part of our country's higher education system and provide many young people with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in today's global economy. About 3,000 students attend LCC. Thanks to President George Knox, Board of Trustees member Sophia Zetmeir and Director of Public Relations Bethany Kendrick for the tour. [Click here to view a photo from my visit.](#)

Learning about Plans for Kansas Army Ammunition Plant

After visiting Labette Community College, I toured the Kansas Army Ammunition Plant. In 2005, the military's Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) ordered this facility to be closed. Since that time, local leaders have been working with the Army to transfer the nearly 14,000 acres from the Army to the community. Plans are being made to transform the area into an industrial park. I visited with Ann Charles, Brian Kinzie, Dan Goddard and Don Dailey about the community's plans and the progress of environmental clean-up.

In the Office

Leslie Mack of Salina was in with the American Association of Diabetes Educators to discuss funding for diabetes education and the need for increased access to diabetes management. Kansas State Representative Mark Treaster of Pretty Prairie and his wife Mary, who is a member of the Kansas State Fair Board, were in to talk about highway funding.

Several Kansans were in this week to tour the U.S. Capitol including Jeff, Linda, Johnathan, Laura Beth and Katie Yarrow of Wakefield. Wes, Ruan, Raisa, Carson, Stephanie and Stephen Windholz of Victoria; Mike, Lisa, Lindsey and Jason Teter of Moundridge; and Anna, Jennifer and Zachary Shaw of Oberlin were in for a tour as well. In from Oakley were Richard, Joyce, Kristen and Patrick Loftus. Kendal, Merri and Kimbre Francis of Beloit; and Grant, Stephanie, Sydney, Will and Grace Bannister of Manhattan were in for a tour. In from Hays were Bill and Marcia Bannister and Tom, Vicki and Kiley Johansen. Taylor Symons of Wamego, Lacey Mackey and Gary Dickinson of Hutchinson, Jake and Wyatt Regehr of Inman, Lane Miller of Medicine Lodge, Kittie Govreau of Salina, Shirley Goza of Leawood, Brad Evenson of Buhler and Ryann Aaron of Belleville were also in for a tour.

Very truly yours,

Jerry