

January 2009 - Work We Can Believe In

WORK WE CAN BELIEVE IN

By Congressman Jerry Moran

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I once read a quote from Kansan, Percy G. Ebbut, that said, "The fact remains: if you are willing to work, you need never despair of getting a livelihood in Kansas." I have not met many Kansans unwilling to work, especially during hard times. When the times get tough, Kansans work harder. Currently, there is a strain on Kansas families and businesses. To improve conditions, it will be important for the new administration and Congress to work, and to work together.

The focus at the beginning of 2009 will be on the economy. President Barack Obama may introduce an economic stimulus package for Congress to consider as one of his first actions in office. Though the final package has yet to be determined, I understand it may include transportation and infrastructure projects. For the U.S. to compete on a global market, I believe it is necessary to invest in bridges, airports and highways to transport goods. However, "business as usual" in Congress is to throw unnecessary spending, pork barrel projects and everything else - including the kitchen sink - into legislation. Congress needs to work to fix the economy the right way, while not spending hastily.

While the economy is a top priority, one of my goals this year is to reduce U.S. reliance on foreign sources of energy. Opportunities to change current energy policies should not be overlooked during a period of lower oil prices. We must continue to pursue effective development of all sources of domestic energy. This includes expanded exploration for traditional energy sources like oil, natural gas, and coal, as well as extensive research and development of alternative energy such as wind, solar, hydrogen, nuclear, hydropower and conservation.

This year, working to fix what is already in place, instead of creating new policy, for education and health care will be vital. We must decrease the escalating costs of health care services while ensuring quality care. Regarding education, changes need to be made to the No Child Left Behind Act, to allow teachers to spend more of their time actually teaching. Both of these need aggressive attention and I plan to work with Congress and the new administration to not lose sight of these crucial issues.

To support those who have served in uniform, I will be working to ensure implementation of two important benefits that were approved in 2008, including an improved GI Bill to help Iraq and Afghanistan veterans afford an education. In addition, my Rural Veterans Access to Care Act will allow rural Kansas veterans to participate in a demonstration project to obtain health care in their home communities to avoid traveling long distances to Veterans Affairs facilities.

My commitment to work as hard as I can for the people of Kansas remains unchanged since the day I was first elected, up to my recent re-election. This month, I raised my hand and swore an oath of office. I am willing to work as hard as I can to do this job to the best of my ability. I am humbled to serve all Kansans and hope others in Washington, D.C., will be willing to work as hard as Kansans do in these difficult times.

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