

6/01/2009 This Week in Congress

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June 1, 2009

Dear Friend,

Welcome to "This Week in Congress." Congress was out of session this week. The break gave me the opportunity to travel around Kansas and talk with people about issues of concern to them. I hope you find this newsletter useful.

Groundbreaking for KU School of Pharmacy

On Tuesday, I traveled to Lawrence for the groundbreaking of the new 110,000-square-foot building for the University of Kansas (KU) School of Pharmacy on KU's West Campus. It was an honor to join KU faculty and administrators, state officials and pharmacists from across Kansas to celebrate this expansion. The new building, and new campus in Wichita, will allow KU to nearly double the number of pharmacy students the school can enroll in its program.

As chair of the Congressional Community Pharmacy Coalition, I understand that the relationship between pharmacists and patients is a vital part of the health care delivery system. Patients depend on pharmacists for information and counseling to assure that they receive quality products and medical services. It is important that we address the ongoing shortage of pharmacists in our state. This much-needed expansion will provide a facility that will allow the KU School of

Pharmacy to accomplish this goal.

I was honored to be included in the groundbreaking ceremony alongside Dean Kenneth Audus, KU School of Pharmacy; KU Chancellor Robert Hemenway; State Senator Vicki Schmidt; Thomas Thornton, Kansas Bioscience Authority; U.S. Senator Pat Roberts; and Emily Prohaska, PharmD Candidate 2010.

Opposing Closures of Auto Dealerships

This week, I again expressed my support for small town community automobile dealerships. General Motors (GM) and Chrysler have sent notifications to cancel franchise agreements to certain dealerships nationwide. Many of these dealerships are independently-owned and located in rural small communities. Closing these dealerships would do nothing to help auto manufactures as the franchised-dealer network was created to outsource virtually all the costs associated with selling and servicing cars.

The bailout of the auto industry and the promise of additional money for GM and Chrysler have given the Obama Administration leverage with these manufacturers. The President's Auto Task Force, an unelected panel of advisors, has forced the rapid and detrimental elimination of thousands of dealerships.

This month, I talked with the White House to relay the concerns I have heard from Kansas auto dealers about these closings. I also joined Congresswoman Lynn Jenkins in objecting to the Automotive Task Force and the White House plan for the auto industry.

Attending Events in Wichita

Lions Club State Convention: On Friday, I attended the Lions Club State Convention. Citizen involvement in civic clubs, such as the Lions Club, helps keep Kansas communities strong. I joined Lions more than 30 years ago and am a member of the Hays Lions Club. I enjoyed my time visiting with Lions' Club members from across Kansas. Thanks to Tom Badger, State Council Chairman, for his hospitality.

Kansas Farm Credit Council: Also on Friday, I met with the directors of Farm Credit lenders from across Kansas at the U.S. AgBank offices in Wichita. During the meeting, we discussed Farm Credit Service (FCS) concerns about the ability to access sufficient capital in the financial markets, which determines FCS' ability to make loans to agricultural producers. We also discussed the possibility that broad financial regulatory reform legislation could remove FCS from the jurisdiction of the House Agriculture Committee - a move that I oppose. We discussed the impact the economic downturn is having on agriculture production, the proposed cap and trade legislation introduced in Congress that I oppose, and recent legislation I introduced to prevent the Environmental Protection Agency from using an indirect land use model to determine greenhouse gas emissions from domestic biofuels.

Women's Association of the Wichita Symphony: Later on Friday, I attended the Women's Association of the Wichita Symphony (WAWS) Patron's Party to preview the Symphony Showhouse XVI. The Wichita Symphony Orchestra, one of the oldest arts organizations in Kansas, has been in existence for 65 years. For the past 50 years, WAWS members have volunteered their time, coordinated fundraisers and managed local projects that have supported the symphony's success.

Every other year, the WAWS stages a Symphony Showhouse project that is the largest of its fundraising efforts. This year, more than 1,000 volunteers and 30 designers and artists were involved in the Symphony Showhouse XVI. The showhouse features four brownstones, the first of 16 to be built in Parkstone's Phase One at College Hill, that will be on display for the public to view. Thanks to Denny and Erlene Senseney for inviting me to this event.

Congressional Caucus on Human Trafficking

I recently became a member of the Congressional Caucus on Human Trafficking after meeting with a group of students from the McPherson Church of the Brethren who were concerned about victims of modern-day slavery. The U.S. Department of State estimates that about 800,000 people are trafficked across borders each year, with even more people trafficked within countries. Most of these victims are women and children. The Congressional Caucus on Human Trafficking works to raise awareness about the issue and advance legislation to end this human rights violation.

Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce Membership Luncheon

On Thursday, I spoke at the Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce Membership Luncheon. I appreciated the opportunity to visit with business and community leaders in Topeka. Several issues discussed during the Membership Luncheon included economic development opportunities, recent economic conditions, the growing national debt, the increasing role of government in the private business sector and the concern of a nuclear Iran.

Among those in attendance were: Maynard Oliverius, President of Stormont-Vail, Inc.; Rick Wienckowski, CFO for Hills Pet Nutrition and Chairman of the Chamber Board; Doug Kinsinger, President of the Chamber; Topeka Mayor Bill Bunten; and Shawnee County Commission Chairman Vic Miller. I applaud the efforts of those in our state who are working to make the communities in which they live better.

Thanks to Christy Caldwell, Vice President of Government Relations for the Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce, for inviting me to speak.

Celebrating the Marriage of West Point Graduates

On Saturday, I attended the wedding of two U.S. Military Academy West Point graduates. Jason Pomeroy of Hesston and Abby Rayl of Hutchinson both graduated at West Point and were married at the First Presbyterian Church in Hutchinson. Several years ago, when Jason and Abby were in high school, I nominated them to West Point. I nominated Abby in 2003 and Jason in 2004. It was moving to see how these two young people have grown since that time and have become leaders in our nation's Army. I wish Jason and Abby the best in their new life together and thank them for their dedicated service to our country. [Click here](#) to learn more about nominations to U.S. Service Academies.

In the Office

Brittany McKee of Ft. Riley was in with the Sierra Club to share information on the Military Families Outdoors program. Lori Neal Bowman of McPherson was in with Hospira to visit about the benefits of generic injectable pharmaceuticals.

Several Kansans visited my Washington, D.C., office this week to receive a tour of the United States Capitol building, including Cliff, Shari, Blake, Bram and Britton Abbott of Liberal; Tim, Mary, Adam and Jacob Helmer of Emporia; Mike and Margaret Sheppard of Great Bend; Maurice and Ingrid Bird of Albert; and Greta Clark of Dodge City.

A group of students from Kepley Middle School in Ulysses, led by Robert Bledsoe, Mackenzie Stinebaugh and Sue Beauregard, also took a tour of the Capitol. In with the group were Chase Bledsoe, Troy Talbert, Seth Shapland, Collin Widder, Michael Brollier, Casey Tuzil, Kelsie Shapland, Morgan Kistler, Bailey Twilleger, Jennifer Calderwood, Daniela Garcia, Maggie Koops, Aubrey Swinehart, Kelsey Kreutzer, Kyler Barlow, Ryan Schonlau, Zach Miller, Austin Cantrell, Tyler Oliver, Nathan Medina, Oren Altis, and Zach Irvin.

Very truly yours,

Jerry