

## 6/22/2009 This Week in Congress

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June 22, 2009

Dear Friend,

Welcome to "This Week in Congress." I hope you find this newsletter useful.

### Introducing Legislation to Halt Government Interference in Private Business

This week, I introduced the Government Ownership Exit Plan Act of 2009 that will remove government involvement in private business. This legislation will relieve the federal government of its ownership of private entities acquired under the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) by the date July 1, 2010. It will require the U.S. Treasury Department to sell any government ownership stake, such as warrants, preferred stock, or common stock, from a private entity. It also prohibits the government from making any management decisions for the private businesses in which it already has an ownership interest.

Government interference with private sector affairs has long passed an expiration date. No good has ever come from such massive government intrusion in the private sector. This was again validated when we examine the results from TARP.

I am one of only 17 members of Congress who voted against every bailout for Wall Street, numerous banks and American International Group (AIG), Inc. Congress voted to give these private entities government funds, and by doing this, violated principles that we know work, principles of an economy.

The Obama Administration is pursuing policies that increase government intrusion into the private sector in ways that are beyond my level of comfort. Congress does need to address the country's economic circumstances, however, those ultimately paying for private sector mistakes have been the American taxpayers. The Government Ownership Exit Plan will halt further irresponsible use of taxpayers' dollars.

#### Supporting U.S. Small Oil and Gas Producers

This week, I led a coalition of congressional members, which included Kansas Congresswoman Lynn Jenkins, in requesting the House Ways and Means Committee reject tax increases that were proposed by President Obama. The President recently proposed approximately \$26 billion in tax increases on small oil and gas producers in his Fiscal Year 2010 Budget.

Many of the taxes the President proposes to increase will not affect large integrated oil companies, but will fall on the many small, independent oil and gas producers here in Kansas. The proposed tax increases would not only drive small energy producers out of business, but it would also leave thousands of employees out of work and would cut off investment in companies that are developing America's energy resources. It will only increase the amount of foreign oil imported by the U.S. and will cripple domestic production.

The Administration's tax proposal will result in increased tax liability on small U.S. companies, lost American jobs, increased reliance on foreign oil and gas and higher fuel costs for consumers. Placing a tax on our energy producers here at home would drive us farther from our common goal to reduce our country's dependence on foreign oil.

### Fighting for Rural Priorities in Health Care Reform

This week, I requested that the leaders of the House committees responsible for drafting health care reform in the House of Representatives consider rural issues when drafting legislation. Democratic congressional leaders and President Obama have vowed to pass a comprehensive overhaul of the health care system before the August congressional recess. I believe this debate is overdue, but I am troubled by the rapid pace that reform legislation is being thrown together. Under this arbitrary deadline and in the haste to pass legislation, I am concerned that rural health care priorities will not be sufficiently addressed.

I serve as Chairman of the House Rural Health Care Coalition (RHCC). The RHCC is comprised of 151 members from under-served states all over the country, and is committed to advancing rural priorities in health care policy. Being from a rural area, I understand that rural Americans face a unique combination of factors and challenges that create certain health care differences not found in urban areas. Rural communities are some of the most underserved areas for health care.

My letter to leaders of the House committees relays three reforms crucial to increase health coverage and access to care for rural Americans, including:

1. The workforce shortage crisis must be abated;
2. Equity in reimbursement must occur; and
3. Health disparities must be eliminated, vulnerable populations must be protected, and disparities in infrastructure must be corrected.

Rural communities have unique health care needs and these issues must be considered in the upcoming health reform discussions. [Click here to read my letter.](#)

Recognized for Conservation Leadership from Pheasants Forever

Recently, I was given the Conservation Leadership Award by Pheasants Forever for the work that I did by pursuing the 'Open Fields' provision in the Farm Bill. This legislation provides incentives for farmers and ranchers to voluntarily make their land accessible for outdoor activities such as hunting and fishing.

Pheasants Forever has done an excellent job of creating greater awareness and expanding participation in our nation's heritage of outdoor sports such as upland bird hunting. They have also had a strong impact on conservation, land use, land access and wildlife habitat management.

Five U.S. Senators and seven U.S. Representatives were recognized by Pheasants Forever for their conservation efforts, and I am honored being among them. [Click here to view a photo.](#)

#### Meeting National History Day Runner-Up Cooper Self

On Wednesday, Gordon and Athena Self of Topeka, along with their son, Cooper, and daughter, Erica, stopped by my office to visit. This week, Cooper competed in the National History Day Competition in College Park, Maryland, with thousands of students from across the nation. Cooper, who will be in 9th grade this fall at Topeka High School, won second place for his presentation titled, "Harry Colmery Writes the First G.I. Bill: The Making of the American Middle Class." Harry Colmery, also from Topeka, authored the original G.I. Bill and was a World War I veteran. I first met Cooper when we both addressed the Kansas American Legion Convention in Topeka earlier this year.

Congratulations to Cooper for sharing Colmery's story and for achieving this outstanding honor at the National History Day Competition. [Click here to view a photo.](#)

#### Touring Glendo Corporation in Emporia

On Monday, en route back to Washington, D.C., I toured the Glendo Corporation in Emporia. Opened in 1977, Glendo is a family owned business that creates tools designed for jewelry and engraving arts, as well as equipment for industry and business. On my tour, I learned that Glendo was named the 1998 Kansas Exporter of the Year. Thank you to the owners and employees for the tour, and to Kim Pember, General Manager, for inviting me.

## Attending Funeral Service for Volunteer Firefighter

I attended the funeral service in Osborne Saturday for Lyle Lewis, a volunteer firefighter of Osborne County Fire District #3 at Alton, who died while battling a home fire on June 16. Lyle's service to the community exemplified the commitment, courage and concern for neighbors that characterizes all volunteer firefighters. These brave citizens are teachers, mechanics, farmers, small business owners and ministers - they are people willing to sacrifice their time, comfort and even lives for the protection of others. They keep us safe and deserve our deepest thanks. I was honored to join so many members of the community, firefighters from around Kansas and the Patriot Guard Riders in paying respect to this hero. My thoughts and prayers are with Lyle's wife Sherry, their children and the rest of the Lewis family.

## Accepting Internship Applications for the Fall

I am now accepting applications for fall internships in my Washington, D.C., Hays, Hutchinson and Salina offices. Congressional interns assist with legislative and administrative projects on behalf of Kansans. Applications are due by July 10. [Click here](#) for more information on how to apply.

## Attending the Kansas Bar Association Installation and Awards Dinner

On Friday, I attended the Kansas Bar Association (KBA) Installation and Awards Dinner in Overland Park. The KBA is an association for dedicated legal professionals and has more than 6,900 members, including lawyers, judges, paralegals and law students. I enjoyed speaking with so many individuals during the evening. Congratulations to all those who received awards, including those recognized for 50, 60 and 70 years of membership to the Kansas Bar; those recognized for their pro bono work; Chief Justice Kay McFarland, who received the Phil Lewis Medal of Distinction for her work within the legal profession; and David J. Rebein, who received the Distinguished Service Award for his continuous longstanding service on behalf of the legal profession. Thank you to KBA president, Thomas Wright, and incoming president, Tim O'Brien, for their hospitality.

### Annual Listening Tour Continues

In the next few weeks, I will continue my Annual Listening Tour with stops in the following counties:

Wednesday, July 1

Wallace County Tour Stop, Sharon Springs

Time: 8:30 to 9:30 AM CST (7:30 - 8:30 AM MST)

Location: Stephen's Restaurant

Address: Highway 27 and 40th

Logan County Tour Stop, Winona

Time: 10:00 to 11:00 AM

Location: Winona Firehouse

Address: 204 Bellview

Friday, July 3

Wabaunsee County Tour Stop, Harveyville

Time: 10:30 to 11:30 AM

Location: Harveyville City Hall

Address: 274 West Oak Street

Saturday, July 25

Ellsworth County Tour Stop, Wilson

Time: 8:30 to 9:30 AM

Location: Senior Center

Address: 511 25th Street

These meetings help me stay in touch with Kansans and learn about what issues continue to be important to them. During each town hall, I am able to listen to folks' concerns and take that information back with me to Washington, D.C.

Residents are invited to attend the town halls to share their thoughts with me on current issues. [Click here to view the listening tour schedule and the areas I have stopped this year.](#)

In the Office

Members of the Kansas Bankers Association were in to update me on issues important to the banking industry. In with the group were, the Honorable Dick Nichols and Chet Lang of McPherson, Mike Stevens of Sublette, Dave Long of Cimarron, Barney Horton of Atwood, Cliff Leach of Goodland, Frank Reifschneider of Garden City, Erik Ganstrom of Seneca, Steve Locke of Junction City, Doug Wareham of Topeka, James Richardson of Stafford and Jeanette Richardson of Inman.

City of Larned Mayor Robert Pivonka and Geneva Pivonka of Larned stopped by my office to visit about health care access for Larned residents. Patti Stalder of Westmoreland and Chris Mensch of Lawrence were in with the Kansas Horse Council to relay their opposition to attempts to ban horse slaughter. John Walker, CEO of Western Plains Regional Hospital in Dodge City, was in to discuss how the Western Plains Medical Complex serves the health care needs of southwest Kansans.

David Ayers of Leawood and Lynn Jeane of Wichita were in with Physicians Hospitals of America to tell me about the role physician owned hospitals play in the delivery of health care to Kansans. Lisa Tokach of Abilene was in with the National Pork Producers Council Veterinarians to talk about pending food safety legislation. Nancy Jackson of Lawrence was in with Climate and Energy Project to discuss climate change legislation.

Curt Miller of Pretty Prairie was in with the Alliance for Retired Americans to visit about the concerns retired Kansans have regarding health care reform. University of Kansas School of Education Dean Rick Ginsberg, Associate Dean Sally Roberts and Keith Yehle of Lawrence were in with the KU School of Education to discuss the university's efforts to innovate and enhance teacher preparation. Gary Champlin of Concordia was in with the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries to tell me about using rubberized asphalt to pave roads.

Fred Lucky and Chad Austin of Topeka were in with the Kansas Hospital Association to discuss the state of hospitals and the health care industry in Kansas. Craig and Paula Manteuffel of Hays were in with the Kansas Music Educators Association to visit about support for education in music and the arts. Chuck Banks, with USDA Rural Development in Kansas, was in to talk about federal disaster relief.

Andy Corbin and Sunee Mickle of Topeka were in with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas to discuss options for comprehensive health care reform. Linn Shaffer of Caldwell, Jan Gerber of Wichita and Eric Everett of Mission were in with the International Academy of Compounding Pharmacists to visit about the unique health care services that compound pharmacists provide to Kansans. Callie Noll of Jetmore was in with the Congressional Youth Leadership Council to share with me her experience in Washington, D.C., and learn more about my role as a Member of Congress.

Jodie Leiss of Emporia was in on behalf of the Kansas Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance to discuss the benefits of quality physical education to reduce and prevent childhood obesity. Sue Peterson, Fred Willich, Kent and Joyce Glassock, Dick Carter, Lyle Butler, Linda Weis, Sydney Carlin, Ron Fehr, Neal Farmer, Chris Butler and Ron Fowles of Manhattan were in with the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce to update me on various issues that are important to the City of Manhattan.

Kenlon Johannes and Dennis Hupe of Topeka, Harold Kraus of Hays, Bob Henry of Robinson and Kaleb Little of Rossville were in with the National Biodiesel Board to discuss implementation of the renewable fuel standard and a biodiesel tax credit for biodiesel producers. Pastor Jose Sanchez and Rosa del Carmen Angulo of Salina and Pastor Guadalupe Castillo and Reverend Dario Salcedo of Kansas City were in with Esperanza to talk about immigration reform.

Tom Horner of Overland Park was in with the Kansas Manufacturing Housing Association to discuss the housing industry and encourage legislation to support home ownership. Bob Storer of Solomon was in with the Railroad Teamsters to talk about legislation that effects labor. Former State Representative George Dean of Wichita was also in to visit.

Several Kansans visited my Washington, D.C., office this week to receive a Capitol tour, including Carol Herndon of Shawnee, Karen Locke of Junction City, Maribeth Long of Cimarron, Marilyn McSpadden of Winfield, Sharon Shepherd of Overland Park, Betty and Lindsay Lehman of Girard, Kelly Leach of Goodland, Lynn Chappell of Augusta, Michael and Cheryl Holmes and Robin Lackamp of Concordia and Grant Lackamp of Manhattan.

Also in for a tour were Ashley, Blake and Danisa Mohny of Seneca; Brent, Courtney and Brittney Price of Wamego; Lindsay and Anders Olsen of Leawood; William, Kelly, Maria and Samantha Young of McPherson; Sheila, Regan and Tatum Forrester and Ken, Amy, Jessica and Just Stonebraker of Salina; Athena Andaya and Gordon, Erica and Cooper Self of Topeka; and Mona Kepley, Jenny Heinz and Thomas and Carla Calvert of Wichita.

Very truly yours,

Jerry