

3/14/2005 This Week in Congress

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March 14, 2005

Dear Friend,

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

Meeting with the Japanese Ambassador on Beef Trade

The battle to reopen the Japanese market to U.S. beef continued on Friday as I met with Japanese Ambassador Ryozo Kato. The purpose of the meeting was to press for a firm date that Japan would resume importing beef from the United States. The good news is that Japanese officials at the highest levels of government are now aware of U.S. frustrations over the beef issue, but the down side is that we have not been able to secure a date for the markets to reopen. It is becoming clear that this process is getting bogged down in a bureaucracy in Japan. The key now is to have Japanese officials put pressure on these bureaucrats to get this process moving.

Last October, Japan officials agreed to a process under which trade would resume. However, six months later, we still have no sales. It is time that the United States see some action from Japan.

The meeting with Ambassador Kato follows my introduction of legislation to impose retaliatory trade sanctions against Japan should it fail to comply with its agreement to resume trade. Japan simply cannot have it both ways-selling products to the U.S. market while refusing to purchase U.S. beef. The U.S. livestock industry and the U.S. Department of Agriculture have taken all steps necessary to assure the safety of our beef and our quality exceeds international standards. Since introducing the resolution in the U.S. House of Representatives, we have managed to secure nearly 60 cosponsors including members of House leadership.

Beef sales to Japan are a major issue for Kansas. The First District is the largest beef producing congressional district in the country, producing over five billion pounds of beef annually. This meeting was an important step toward opening up our markets, and I will continue working toward making this a reality.

Providing for Better, Safer Kansas Highways

On Thursday, the House passed H.R. 3, highway funding reauthorization legislation known as the Transportation Equity Act. The legislation includes approximately \$380 million per year for six years in Kansas. This funding will create and sustain thousands of jobs for Kansans.

During consideration of this legislation, I was able to attach an amendment that clarifies the existing exemption to the federal hours of service regulations for truck drivers transporting agricultural commodities and farm supplies within 100 miles of the field or commodity distribution point. The amendment also defines what an agricultural commodity is within

the law. This is important because it will allow farmers to get grain from their fields to the co-ops in a timely fashion during busy planting and harvesting seasons.

Having safe and adequate roads is critical to supporting our communities and is something that will benefit individuals, families and businesses throughout the state. Kansas has the fourth largest number of public roads in the nation, totaling more than 134,500 miles, and ranks third among all states in the number of bridges. The First Congressional District alone has more road miles than 29 states in the U.S.

The Senate is currently considering their version of the transportation bill. A conference committee will then meet to work out the differences between the House and Senate-passed versions of the legislation before it is signed into law. I will keep you updated on this important legislation.

Working to Restore House Agriculture Budget

This week I continued working with House leadership and House Budget Committee Chairman Jim Nussle (R-IA) to ensure that funding to the agriculture community is not disproportionately cut under the President's budget recommendations. This is a long and difficult process but we are making progress on this issue. The House Budget Committee has been able to soften the cuts to agriculture. This was done by finding savings in other areas, which resulted in reducing the president's suggested cuts by half.

I will continue working with my colleagues and House leadership on behalf of agriculture and will keep you updated on the progress.

Honoring Pilot Steve Fossett and the Salina Community

This week, I recognized the success of the GlobalFlyer, pilot Steve Fossett and the contributions of the Salina community in a speech in the House of Representatives. The GlobalFlyer made its record-setting around-the-world flight in 67 hours and one minute beginning on Monday, February 28, 2005, and ending on Wednesday, March 3, 2005, at the renowned "America's Fuel Stop"- the Salina Municipal Airport.

In the speech, I recognized not only the GlobalFlyer crew but the talented and dedicated staff of Dr. Dennis Kuhlman, Dean of the College of Technology and Aviation at Kansas State University at Salina, the Salina Airport Authority Board of Directors, Tim Rogers, Executive Director, the Salina Area Chamber of Commerce, led by Gerald Cook, President/CEO, and the City of Salina, Monte Shadwick, Mayor and Dennis Kissinger, City Manager. This was truly a collaborative effort, befitting a record-setting feat.

To read the full text of my speech, click: http://www.house.gov/apps/list/speech/ks01_moran/speech030905GlobalFlyer.html

Meeting With the Kansas Dental Association

On Saturday, I met with Dr. Jeff Stasch, President, and Kevin Robertson, Executive Director, of the Kansas Dental Association in Hays. We discussed the need to increase dental access in rural Kansas. Providing adequate dental coverage is an important issue to me and to rural Kansas.

The need for adequate coverage was emphasized recently in Salina when the Kansas Mission of Mercy offered a free dental clinic to residents on Sunday, February 20, 2005. During that day, the clinic served over 2,520 patients that would not normally have had access to dental care. Of the 2,520 patients, there were over 2,300 fillings and 3,700 extractions carried out.

In the Office

Among those visiting my Washington, D.C. office this week were Suzanne Bollig from Hays, Debbie Fox from Wichita and society president Meg Trump from Wichita, in on behalf of the Kansas Respiratory Care Society. Justin Schrag from Gossel and Mike Womochil from Abilene were in on behalf of the Kansas Association of Agriculture Educators to discuss technical education funding. Also in to discuss education issues were Ron and Marcia Brown from Kensington, representing the Kansas Association of Elementary School Principals. Stuart Bell, Dean of the KU School of Engineering, Terry King from Wichita State University and Walter Horn from Kansas Sate University in Manhattan to discuss transportation issues.

In the office to discuss a number of veterans issues were representatives from the Disabled American Veterans (D.A.V.) and the Veterans of Foreign Wars (V.F.W.). In from the D.A.V. were Charlie Stephens and Dave Price of Salina, Steve Henre of Kansas City, David Brader of Parsons, Franklin Bergquist of Wichita and Floyd Britting of El Dorado. In from the VFW was Darrell Bencken, Jeff Lawson and B.J. McGee from Topeka, William Beckham, Orlin Wagner and James Denison from Wichita, Tom Sanko from Dodge City, Charley Shoemaker from Leavenworth, Norman Staab from Hays, Leon Shaw from Parsons, Michael Clark from Lansing, Larry and Lonnie Graham from Tribune, McKinley Smith from Junction City, Lewie Cooper from El Dorado, Jim Graham from McPherson, Joe Wahrman from Goodland, Dick Weston from Benton and Bob Greene, Bud Haney, Ron Browning and Russell Curtright from Kansas City.

Mike Turnbull from Emporia and Bob Sterbens from Wichita were in the office from the Kansas Funeral Directors Association. Lisa Loeb, Executive Director of the Reno County Public Transportation Department in Hutchinson, and Ron Butts, Executive Director of the Kansas Public Transit Association, were in to talk about the Transportation Equity Act. Kim Moore from the United Methodist Health Ministries Foundation in Hutchinson and Carolyn Williams from the Kansas Health Foundation in Wichita were in to discuss access to health care. Deborah Lewis, President of the Taylor Abstract Title Company in Larned was in to talk about privacy issues surrounding public records. In to discuss the Freedom of Information Act with the Kansas Press Association were Steve and Cynthia Haynes, representing western Kansas publishing from Oberlin, John Lewis from Legal Record in Olathe, Murrel and Carol Bland from Kansas City, Kansas former owners of Wyandotte West and the Piper Press. Kansas Representative Clark Shultz and his wife Lori from Lindsborg were in the office visiting, as was Allen Moore from Ulysses High School, who was in on behalf of the Congressional Youth Leadership Council.

In for a tour of the U.S. Capitol this week were Pastor Thomas Reid and his son William of Salina. Also in the office for tours were Monica Wilson from Norton, Gale and Ranelle Hays and their sons Ethan and Gunnar from Prairie Village, Dick Kaufman, Brannon Bontrager and Sara Chrystie from Hutchinson, Kendall Johnson from Haven and Breanna McMurry from Burrton.

Very truly yours,

Jerry