

4/11/2005 This Week in Congress

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April 11, 2005

Dear Friend,

Welcome to "This Week in Congress." I hope you find it useful. This week, the Congressional workweek was cut short due to Members of Congress attending the funeral services of Pope John Paul II. This allowed me to spend more time in Kansas.

Working to Fight Methamphetamine Through Tighter Restrictions

On Monday, Kansas Bureau of Investigation (KBI) Director Larry Welch, Kansas Meth Prevention Project Coordinator Cristi Cain and local law enforcement officers joined me to tour the KBI laboratory in Great Bend and to announce my sponsorship of several legislative measures designed to combat methamphetamine use in Kansas. Last month I attended the funeral services of Greenwood County Sheriff Matt Samuels, who was killed serving a warrant at a home being used as a meth lab. The untimely death of Sheriff Samuels serves as a wake-up call that we need to do more to stop the spread of meth in our state.

The legislation I have sponsored includes H.R. 314, the Combat Methamphetamine Act, and H.R. 13, the Clean, Learn,

Educate, Abolish, Neutralize and Undermine Production (CLEAN-UP) of Methamphetamine Act. I am also working to establish a methamphetamine pilot program that would provide targeted assistance to high-risk states with more than 200 methamphetamine lab seizures in a given year.

The Combat Methamphetamine Act, provides funding for law enforcement and prosecutorial training and also reclassifies pseudoephedrine as a Schedule V drug. This would require that it be stored behind pharmacists' counters, making it more difficult to steal for use in illegal meth manufacturing. The legislation also provides enhanced treatment options and services for children affected by meth. The CLEAN-UP Act includes provisions to clean farms and parks damaged by meth labs and provides assistance to schools and health care clinics to promote effective programs to keep children off meth.

The meth crisis is creating a significant strain on our county sheriffs and police departments. According to the Kansas Bureau of Investigation, in 2004, Kansas law enforcement officials seized 583 meth labs, ranking Kansas eleventh in the nation for total meth lab seizures. This legislation will help our law enforcement officials obtain the necessary tools to combat this continued problem.

Meeting with Japanese

Ambassador to Discuss Beef Trade

This week, I joined the House Agriculture Committee to meet with Japanese Ambassador Ryozo Kato to discuss opening the Japanese markets to U.S. beef. This was the second time I have met with the Ambassador to discuss this issue, but I left the meeting with no better sense of when the Japanese government would reopen their borders.

The Japanese markets have been closed since the U.S. discovered a single case of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy in a Canadian dairy cow. Since that time, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has aggressively implemented additional safety checks in the beef system to guarantee the safety of American beef. The result is that U.S. standards now exceed international beef safety standards.

Because of my frustration, I have introduced a resolution calling for immediate retaliatory economic sanctions to be used against Japan if it fails to abide by its agreement to reopen its border. The agreement was reached with U.S. trade negotiators on October 23, 2004. Since Japan closed its markets to U.S. beef in December 2003, the U.S. has lost an estimated \$2 billion in sales.

My patience with the Japanese government is wearing thin. The Japanese government has no scientific reason to keep their market closed. I will continue working with the livestock industry, administration officials, congressional leaders and my colleagues to determine the next step in this ongoing battle and ensure that Kansas ranchers have access to international beef markets.

Meeting with City Officials in Junction City

On Thursday, I traveled to Junction City to meet with city officials to discuss their concerns and answer questions about the federal government. I met with Mayor Mick Wunder, city manager Rod Barnes, County Commission Chair Bill Deppish, Geary County Economic Development Commission Director Larry Cope and Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Cheryl Lyn Higgins, to discuss issues facing the community, specifically the upcoming arrival of a new brigade in

2005. Recently, the Department of Defense announced that it would increase Fort Riley's strength by nearly 30 percent, moving in 9,300 troops, family members and new civilian workers with the Sixth Brigade, 25th Infantry Division.

Housing remains the biggest challenge facing the city and the area at this point. To help meet the shortage, city officials expressed a need for plumbers, electricians, carpenters and other workers to assist in repairs, remodeling and construction. Other concerns include the additional demands upon the education and transportation system that the influx in people will do to the area. I reported that we have had some success. Last month, the House passed legislation I sponsored that provides \$14.5 million in funding to expand the existing two-lane K-18 to a four-lane road from the Riley/Geary County line south to Interstate 70. The legislation also includes \$784,000 for Old Highway 77 for resurfacing, grading, replacing guardrails and adding shoulders to an approximately four-mile stretch north of Fort Riley.

Later that day, I attended the quarterly meeting of the Junction City Chamber of Commerce. John Armbrust, chair of Governor's Strategic Military Planning Commission, was the program at the event. Mr. Armbrust discussed the ongoing work of the commission as they attempt to keep Kansas military installations from being closed and to further enhance their military mission. I also spoke to those gathered about current issues in Congress affecting Fort Riley and the entire military community.

Meeting with Kansas Crop Insurance Agents

While in Junction City on Thursday, I was also able to meet with a number of crop insurance agents from across the state to discuss delivering crop insurance to Kansas farmers. As Chair of the House Agriculture Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and Risk Management, my responsibility is to help oversee the implementation and maintenance of this program. The agents expressed their concerns about future viability of the crop insurance program, and their desire to make sure it remains a useful risk management tool for Kansas farmers.

Among those attending were Bill Hanson, President of KanOk Insurance Services, Inc. of Manhattan, J. R. McMillan with JK Agency in Salina, Jerry Cady with the Jerry Cady Agency in Marion, Jeff and Rosemary Harris with Harris Crop Insurance in Abilene, Carol Bloesser and Larry Steele with First Tribune Insurance Agency, Inc. of Tribune, Paula Hattrup with Hattrup Ag of Kinsley, Shannon Moore with The Agency of Montezuma, Shannon Foster with Rain and Hail Insurance Services, LLC of Newton and Clark Redding with Heartland Crop Insurance Company, Inc. of Larned. Their input was valuable to me and I appreciate the time they spent in providing me with a better understanding of crop insurance issues.

Honoring the Life of Pope John Paul II

On Thursday evening, I attended mass at Saint Joseph's Catholic Church in Hays for a memorial service for Pope John Paul II who passed away last weekend. I appreciated the opportunity to join others to honor the life of the Pope. I have great respect and admiration for Pope John Paul II - for the difference he made in so many people's lives, and for the difference he made around the world. His message of respect for life and for our fellow man is one we should all remember and hold true.

Speaking with Kansans on Public Television

This past Saturday, I appeared on Smoky Hills Public Television for a live installment of "Mid-America Life: A Conversation with Jerry Moran." Joining me on the program were Dr. Dick Heil, Director of the Docking Institute of Public Affairs at Fort Hays State University, and John Montgomery, publisher and editor of the Hays Daily News.

The show allowed me to provide an update on current activities in Congress, as well as take calls from Kansans. Kansans called to discuss fuel and energy prices, the high costs of health care and the war in Iraq. The show was a good reminder of the many issues that face our state and nation. I will take the comments and suggestions from the show back

to Washington, D.C. as I work on behalf of Kansans.

Rediscovering Kansas through the Annual Big First Listening Tour

A week from today, Monday, April 19, I will begin my annual Big First Listening Tour in Cottonwood Falls. This is my ninth annual tour, with stops planned in all 69 counties of the First Congressional District. This year's tour will emphasize the importance of small town tourism with many of the stops planned at historical and tourist sites. "Rediscovering Kansas" will help focus on building awareness of Kansas tourism sites throughout the First District.

The annual listening tour provides me with an opportunity to meet personally with Kansans to discuss your concerns and problems, and to receive instructions on what I should focus upon in Congress. Also, by helping people to rediscover Kansas, we can bring to light the efforts of those that work to preserve and protect the history and individuality of our state.

Stops planned for Monday, April 18, are:

Chase County, Cottonwood Falls- 8:30-9:30 a.m.- Grand Central Hotel and Grill, 215 Broadway

Greenwood County, Madison- 10:30-11:30 a.m.- Madison Historical Society, 3rd and Boone

Lyon County, Reading- 12:30-1:30 p.m.- Reading Civic Building, 615 First Street

Wabaunsee County, Harveyville- 2:30-3:30 p.m.- Harveyville Seed Company, 100 N. Main

A full schedule of the meetings can be found here: http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/ks01_moran/041105TheTour.html

In the Office

Many Kansans were in my office for meetings this week. Kansas Adjutant General, Major General Todd Bunting was in, with Brigadier General Ed McIlhenny, Brigadier General John Small and Colonel Adam King, to provide me with an update on issues facing the Kansas National Guard. In to discuss senior long-term care for the elderly in Kansas were representatives from the Kansas Association of Homes and Services for the Aging. Kim Bramhall of Vermillion was in, as president of the Kansas Land Contractors. Joining him to discuss their priorities were his wife, Annette, and their son Anthony, as well as Ron and Laurie Jueneman from Hanover. Paul Jones of LaCrosse and Tara Pauley of Conway Springs, dental students at the University of Missouri Kansas City Dental School, were in to discuss student aid and rural dental care. In to talk about medical liability and reimbursements was Dr. Kevin McDonald of Hays, representing the American Association of Clinical Urologists.

I enjoyed my visit with Brian Black, president, and Mildred Edwards, both of Wichita, of the Kansas Urban League. In with Kansas YMCA were Kirby List and Bob Fee, both of Hutchinson. Sandy Kuhlman of Phillipsburg was in to talk about hospice care. In the office representing the Kansas State Association of Watersheds was Herb Graves of Chapman. Jerry Brown of Haddam was in with the American Honey Producers to talk about shipping issues. Several Kansas 4-H'ers were in, including Ashley K. Guenther of Ottawa, Whitney Michelle Madden of Wakefield, Creighton Dale Olsen of Larned and Barbara Addison, County Extension Agent for Finney County. Also in, to discuss their goals and ask about assistance available to rural telephone companies, were Kansans representing the United Telecom Association.

In for tours of the Capitol building were Julie Washburn of LaCrosse and her grandson, Tanner Archer of Marysville, Missouri. Also in were Charles and Leslie Perkins and Amy Oelke of Great Bend, Philip and Rosella Heier of Grainfield, Shelley Long of Salina, Vernalee Olson of Brookville, Betty Innes of Hays, Zella Roeder of Phillipsburg, Sheree Kennedy of Haysville and Jon and Kim Birky of Russell, as well as Kansas City residents Dale and Maria Fox and their children Lauren and Leana along with David and Claudia Maquera.

Very truly yours,

Jerry