

6/27/2005 This Week in Congress

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June 27, 2005

Dear Friend,

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

Working to Provide More Flexibility to Kansas Schools

This week I sponsored legislation to increase local control and flexibility in education, while maintaining the high education standards Kansas schools have always worked toward. I sponsored this legislation in response to growing concerns by many Kansas educators about the restrictions placed on their schools and classrooms by the education plan, No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

In all the rhetoric and discussion about school funding, we need to keep in mind that Kansas already has great schools. My legislation, the State and Local Education Flexibility Act of 2005, will help Kansas schools that are already doing well, but need more local control over their classrooms, while still adhering to NCLB. While I voted against NCLB because of concerns that the legislation would place too many federal restrictions on the classroom, I have been meeting and working with teachers and school administrators to make sure that the law works for Kansas teachers and students.

Calling for Immediate Sanctions on Japan Over Beef Trade

This week, I renewed my call to impose sanctions on Japan for its continued stall tactics in not reopening its borders to U.S. beef imports. Earlier this year, I introduced a resolution calling on the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) to seek economic sanctions against Japan if it failed to comply with an agreement reached last October to reopen their borders once sufficient testing procedures were put into place. Since that time, the U.S. Agriculture Department has taken extensive measures to guarantee the safety of American beef. The success of the advanced testing procedures was demonstrated this past week when a second case of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) was confirmed in the U.S. The case was identified, isolated, and at no point did the infected cow come near entering the beef supply.

Earlier this week, Bush Administration officials expressed frustration over the continued lack of movement on the issue by Japan. I have met with the Ambassador of Japan on several occasions, expressing concern over the lack of action, and have urged Japan not to place its long-standing trade history with the U.S. unnecessarily at risk.

The U.S. discovered its first case of BSE in December of 2003. Japan banned U.S. beef as a result, but later agreed to resume imports once proper safety procedures were implemented. The new U.S. safety procedures put into place since then, now actually exceed international beef safety standards, while the Japanese have documented many cases of BSE in their own livestock.

The ban by Japan has cost U.S. cattle producers over \$2 billion in sales, and Japan simply cannot have it both ways. Our beef is excellent and this past week's positive test just reinforces that our safety checks are effective.

Helping Kansas Elevators Obtain Emergency and Temporary Storage Space

On Tuesday, I was contacted by several Kansas grain elevators about an urgent need to get emergency storage approval for grain. With Kansas wheat harvest moving through the state, several local co-ops were quickly running out of storage space. While this is not uncommon, the USDA requires an authorization to store grain on the ground or in temporary storage facilities. This storage approval is important because without this designation, farmers would become ineligible for commodity programs on those bushels. I contacted officials within the USDA and was pleased to hear approval was given to these federally licensed elevators the following day.

Protecting our American Flag

This week, I supported House passage of an amendment that would authorize Congress to outlaw the desecration of the American flag. While opponents of this measure claim there is no need to amend the Constitution over this issue, I have supported this measure each time it has been considered by Congress.

As we approach our nation's birthday and as thousands of American troops are serving abroad to defend our freedom, I believe this amendment sends a strong signal to those who threaten our way of life. While I strongly feel that American citizens should have the right to express themselves, they should not do so by burning and destroying the very flag that countless Americans have fought and died to preserve.

From Iwo Jima to Ground Zero, our flag is a cherished icon that deserves protection. Its 13 bars and 50 stars are more than just the banner of our country; they represent all we have worked to achieve over the past 230 years. I hope the Senate will follow the House's lead and support this amendment.

Breaking Ground for a New Army Reserve Center and Recognizing Troops in Hays

On Saturday, I attended a ceremony to break ground on a new Army Reserve Center in Hays and formally recognize the service of the 388th Medical Battalion stationed there.

The new 200-member facility will be constructed through funds I helped obtain from the Department of Defense. When completed next May, the Army Reserve Center will contain over 43,000 square feet and will provide the training, administrative, work and storage space to support the critical mission of the 388th. This battalion has a proud history, and with this new Reserve facility, they have a promising future to serve the citizens of Kansas and our nation.

I also participated in a Welcome Home Warrior Citizen Award Program for around 50 members of the 388th who have recently returned from overseas. Established by Congress in 2004, the Warrior-Citizen Award thanks Army Reservists for their service in support of Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom. Soldiers receive an encased American flag, commemorative coin and lapel pin set as a memento for their service.

It is important we hold events such as this to offer our appreciation to the men and women who sacrifice so much to defend our country. It is their bravery, spirit and sacrifice that safeguards our freedoms and our way of life. These are everyday people who put love of country over self, and we owe them our gratitude.

Big First Tour Continues

Following the event in Hays, I met with Logan County residents in Oakley as part of my Big First Listening Tour.

For a full list of times and dates when I'll be in your county, visit here: http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/ks01_moran/041105TheTour.html

In the Office

I met with many Kansans in Washington, D.C., this week. On Tuesday, I had the chance to meet with the inductees to the National Teachers Hall of Fame. Emporia State University president, Dr. Kay Schallenkamp and others from ESU were in Washington for national recognition ceremonies. Also this week, Vickie Deines of Hoxie and Vicki Worrell of Emporia were in representing the Kansas Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance. They discussed No Child Left Behind and funding for the Physical Education Progress Act. Employees of the Salina Surgical Hospital were in to discuss Medicare. Those attending were LuAnn Puvogel, Dr. Bill Alsop and Dr. David Smith, all of Salina. In to discuss health care for the uninsured was Karla Finnell, Director of the Kansas Association for the Medically Underserved of Topeka. Also in my office were Jim Stack and Will Baldwin, both of Manhattan with the Kansas State University National Plant Diagnostic Network. We discussed soybean rust and how the system discovered it.

In my office this week to discuss water issues was David Pope with the Kansas Water Authority of Topeka, while Mike Kelley with the Yellow Railway Corporation of Overland Park was in to discuss pension issues. Lenexa Mayor Mike Boehm was in, along with Sue Gamble of Shawnee, a member of the State Board of Education, and social science instructor Ron Walker of Lenexa. I also met with a number of students in representing various student leadership organizations. I met with Grant Kollman of Stockton, Miguel Alvarez of Garden City, Elyssa Buss of Newton and Adam Weigel of Brookville. I also visited with Katrin Arnold of Emporia, a German foreign exchange student and Jenny Faber of Hays, who has been an exchange student in Germany.

In my office this week for tours of the Capitol building were Jeannette Suber of Maple Hill; Paul and Debbie Campbell of Salina and their children Molly, Hannah, Claire and Andrew; Keith and Lori Housand, originally of Topeka but now in South Carolina, and their children, Sam, Alexandra and Tim; Chris and Ginger Kollman of Stockton; Jack and Bernadine Masters of Troy; Garold Hewitt of Hutchinson with his children Cory, Evan, Joseph and Kylie; Edward and Mary Hall of Liberal and son Matthew; and Douglas and Sandy Shultz of Nickerson. Also in were David and Deba Brant of Topeka with their children Samantha, John and Alexandria; Shannon and Carol Francis of Liberal with their children Kelly, Kimberly and John; and Steve and Lynn Schmidt of Hutchinson with their sons Ryan, Austin and Evan. The family of Mark Colwell of Hays, an intern in my Washington D.C. office this summer was in the office. In were Mark's parents, Kent and Lisa Colwell, his grandparents, Don and Mary Billips of Hill City and a friend, Darron Carswell of Hays.

Also in this week were students with the Kansas Electric Co-op Youth Tour. Students from across the state were in Washington, D.C. including Erica Miesenheimer of Pretty Prairie, Sheyenne Werner of Horton, Harris Butler of Towanda, Timarie Trarbach of Salina, Kate Taylor of Topeka, Krystle Thompson of Rossville, Amanda Mumma and Ashley Ming of Dighton, Molly Sailors of Perry, Emily Renyer and Erica Reeves of Burlington, Justine Nelson of Little River, Baylee Hess of Scott City, Stacey Heinen of Seneca, Jessica Monaghan of Haviland, Calista Sneyd of Ulysses, Casey Cook of Johnson, Loren Cressler of Hoxie, Elizabeth Berland of Damar, Andrea Shaw of Wilson, McKenzie Posch of Mt. Hope, Sharayah Stitt of Milton, Stephanie Temaat of Spearville, Zach Raugewitz of Dodge City, Kristen Weber of Ellis and Ana Foley and Craig Foley of Norton. Shana Holsteen of Topeka was the sponsor for the group.

A special guest in the office this week was my daughter, Kelsey. She was in Washington, D.C. for the week with her dad. However, since dad was busy most of the day, she also brought a friend, Riana Legleiter, also of Hays.

Very truly yours,

Jerry