

8/01/2005 This Week in Congress

This Week in Congress

August 1, 2005

Dear Friend,

This week was the final week of legislative business before Congress adjourned for the month of August. Congress will resume its legislative work after Labor Day. During the next month, "This Week in Congress" will be on hiatus as well. It was a busy week as Congress worked to get many pressing issues resolved. I hope you find this newsletter useful.

Renewable Fuel Use at All-Time High Under New Energy Bill

After years of work, Congress this week passed a comprehensive energy bill and sent it to the President to become law. The legislation is great news for the Kansas economy, as it requires historic levels of renewable fuel use.

Because of the use of renewable fuels, such as ethanol, a gallon of gas is already estimated to be ten cents cheaper. The use of more grain-based fuels is good for the environment, because they burn cleaner; good for Kansas farmers, who will have additional markets for their crops; and good for the Kansas economy because of additional jobs and revenue. This energy bill has been a long time coming, and Kansas will benefit from its passage.

H.R. 6, the Energy Policy Act of 2005, would require petroleum refiners to use 7.5 billion gallons of renewable fuels, such as ethanol and biodiesel, by 2012. Kansas currently has seven ethanol plants in operation, with a capacity of 170 million gallons per year, using 65 million bushels of corn and grain sorghum. Several more plants are in various stages of development.

Also included in this comprehensive energy legislation are incentives for more domestic oil production, as well as investments in the country's electric transmission capacity in order to reduce the danger of blackouts. Other provisions call for additional use of solar energy and incentives for hybrid cars and hydrogen use. For far too long, we've been relying on other countries to supply our fuel. Finally, we can depend more on our homegrown products and energy sources to meet the needs of the American people.

Kansas Benefits from Transportation Reauthorization Legislation

Also this week, the House passed final legislation reauthorizing funding for federal highways, public transportation programs and safety initiatives through 2009. In Kansas, H.R. 3, The Transportation Equity Act, will invest about \$383 million a year for five years in transportation infrastructure and is estimated to create thousands of new jobs.

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. Kansas highways, roads and bridges link our producers and travelers to the rest of the country. Whether it's driving to school or hauling grain, Kansans rely upon the safety and efficiency of the state's transportation system.

This legislation includes funding for a number of specific projects in Kansas, as well as funding initiatives to improve the overall safety of the nation's roads and interstate system. There is also funding to improve traffic congestion and upgrade bridges, roads and public transit across the nation.

For more information on the specific projects in the legislation, visit here: http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/ks01_moran/pr072805HighwayBill.html

House Passes CAFTA

On Wednesday, the House passed the Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). This agreement will normalize trading relations and reduce tariffs with six Latin American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic.

The week before the vote, I met with President Bush and U.S. Trade Representative Rob Portman to express my concerns with this agreement. During the meeting, I told them that while it is good to lower the tariffs that U.S. exporters of manufactured goods and agricultural commodities pay when selling to foreign countries, our trade policy has to consist of more than just entering into trade agreements. It seems as though time and time again, even after tariff reductions are agreed to, many of our trading partners find excuses to limit sales of our products in their countries. They cannot have it both ways - their products coming into our country, and our sales restricted. We must have a level playing field for our producers.

We also discussed my concerns about other trade issues, and I urged the Administration to ease restrictions on trade with Cuba, and to work with me to pressure Japan to reopen its border to U.S. beef imports. Beef sales in Japan is the number one trade issue facing the First District of Kansas.

Reforming the U.S. Postal Service

Also on Tuesday, the House passed H.R. 22, the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act. This legislation gives the U.S. Postal Service more flexibility so it can function more like a business and remain competitive in the mailing services market. This legislation helps maintain universal service so that our rural locations will continue to have postal services. H.R. 22 now goes to the Senate for consideration.

Ag Committee Passes Grain Standards Act

This week, legislation that I introduced, reauthorizing the U.S. Grain Standards Act for the next five years passed out of the House Agriculture Committee. This legislation continues the USDA's authority to charge and collect fees to cover costs of inspection and weighing services and to receive appropriated dollars for standardization and compliance activities.

The U.S. Grain Standards Act first became law in 1916. In the intervening 89 years, Congress has reauthorized and amended the U.S. Grain Standards Act so that the law could adapt to changes in grain production, grain marketing, crop diversity, competitive pressure and fiscal constraints.

It is essential to the overall economic position of the U.S. that the quality of our exports and the integrity of our grain inspection system be maintained at the highest level possible. U.S. grain standards benefit the entire grain marketing system, including producers and consumers of grain and grain products.

Big Red One to Return to Fort Riley

On Wednesday, the Department of Defense announced that the headquarters for the U.S. Army's First Infantry Division, also known as the Big Red One, will return to Fort Riley next year. The First Division Headquarters was housed at Fort Riley until 1996, when it was moved to Germany. Also as a result of today's announcement, three Brigade Combat Teams will be stationed at Fort Riley within the next year.

This is great news for Fort Riley and all of Kansas. The Fort and Junction City have worked hard to make Fort Riley one of the premier war training centers in the world. This announcement demonstrates that Fort Riley is essential to meeting today's military needs, and that it has the training and deployment capabilities our nation requires. The Fort also has the strong community support necessary to provide a high quality of life for our soldiers and their families.

In the coming weeks and months I will work with my colleagues in Congress to make sure that Kansas and the Fort Riley area are prepared for the increase in jobs, people and demands and can accommodate these troops and their families. Junction City and Geary County have been great additions to the First District, and I will work to see that the area's

housing and infrastructure needs are met.

Honoring the Life of Ina Selfridge of Jetmore

On Sunday, July 17, Kansas and agriculture lost a great advocate in Hodgeman County farmer Ina Selfridge. Ina was a familiar face in my office in Washington, D.C., as a long-time member and president of WIFE, or Women Involved in Farm Economics.

This week I gave a speech in the House honoring Ina and talking about the loss of this great woman. In the speech I said, "Probably the greatest compliment I could give Ina is that she was a great farm girl. In truth, she embodied much of what is good and decent about the family farm and the way of life we enjoy in Kansas."

My family's thoughts and prayers go out to Ina's family in this time of difficulty, with hopes that they realize that their loss on Earth is God's gain in heaven.

For the full text of the speech, visit here: http://www.house.gov/apps/list/speech/ks01_moran/sp072005InaSelfridge.html

Visiting Wilson and the Czech Festival on the Big First Listening Tour

This week, the Big First Listening Tour took me to Wilson, in Ellsworth County, where I joined area residents for the annual Czech Festival Parade. This gave me the opportunity to see many Kansans during the parade and to meet and talk with folks afterwards.

I will complete my tour this month. 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](http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/ks01_moran/041105TheTour.html)

In the Office

In my office to discuss education issues were representatives from Mid America Nazarene University, in Olathe. Representing the school were President Dr. Ed Robinson and Vice President of Institutional Advancement Dwight Douglas. I also met with several Kansas Elementary and Secondary School Principals. Those attending the meeting were Deb Ayers-Geist of Blue Rapids, Becky Greer of McPherson, Ron and Dana Keller of Hugoton and Joe Martin of Frontenac.

Kansas Representative Kasha Kelly was in to discuss the recent special session in Topeka, while Earl Watkins of Hays was in to discuss power issues on behalf of his company, Sunflower Electric. Liz Zirger-Hochscheid of Overland Park, co-chair of the Kansas Day Club, stopped by the office for a visit, as did Wichita City Councilwoman Sue Schlapp. I met with a number of young people this week, including Christian Watkins of Chanute, Kelsey Fowler of Emporia, Christopher Valencia of Olathe and Harrison George of Wichita. The four were in Washington, D.C. representing the Kansas Girls and Boys Nation. I met with Kansas FFA representatives Sean Turner of Ottawa and Sharita Lacey of Colony. Sean is the newly elected State FFA President and Sharita is the State FFA Vice President. Mark Mosier of Salina came in for a visit. Mark is in Washington, D.C. clerking for Chief Justice William Rehnquist at the Supreme Court. I also visited with Mike Munson of Junction City, who is currently serving as an intern for Senator Pat Roberts. Mike is the son of my friends Robert and Chris Munson of Junction City. Also in my office for a visit were Danielle Miller of Great Bend and Stuart Bell of Lawrence, as part of the Junior Statesmanship program.

In my office this week for tours of the Capitol building were Cheryl Catron of Leawood; Julie Charay of Topeka; Wes and Joan Jackson of Salina and their grandchildren, Nettie Enshayan of Cedar Rapids, IA, and Jacob Miller of Westmoreland. Bill and Pam Boekhaus of Richfield were in; as were Cynthia Denton of Rolla and her children, Brooke and Bragen. Kelce Goebel of Overland Park was in; as were Ralph and Norma and Ryan Unger of Oberlin; Jonalan Smith of Colby; Bob and Rachel Garrell of Bland, MO, and their children, Conner and Logan; Butch and Colleen Rittmann of Oberlin and their children, Christian and Rielly; and Gary and Melody Head of Dodge City with their son.

Sarah Braun of Hays, an intern in my Washington D.C. office this summer, had family in the office, this week. In were John and Connie Braun of Victoria, and their children, Cara and Amanda, and Curt and Lori Riedel and their children, Paul, Mark and Tony, who are originally from Kansas but are now are stationed in the Washington, D.C. area in the Air Force. Another special guest in my Washington, D.C. office this week, was my daughter, Kelsey.

Very truly yours,

Jerry