

9/19/2005 This Week in Congress

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September 19, 2005

Dear Friend,

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

Appointment to Task Force on Gas Prices

This week, House Majority Whip Roy Blunt (R-MO) appointed me to serve on a task force to address increasing fuel prices. I will join eight other Members of Congress in serving on the Gas Price Task Force, with the goal of finding ways to reduce the nationwide fuel prices.

Since arriving in Congress, I have consistently advocated for the passage of comprehensive energy legislation. I supported H.R. 6, the Energy Policy Act of 2005, which was signed into law on August 8. The Gas Price Task Force will work together on price, supply and regulatory issues.

An increase in global demand, coupled with restricted oil supplies and the devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina on the Gulf Coast, have contributed to escalating fuel prices. Congress must continue working to support the expansion of domestic production, increase our national refining capacity and encourage the growth of renewable fuels, including ethanol and biodiesel, as well as promote energy conservation.

These high prices are creating financial hardships for families, farmers and businesses in our state and across the country. I am honored to be a part of this task force as we work to bring down the cost of fuel nationwide.

Secretary of Agriculture Hosts Farm Bill Forum at Kansas State Fair

Senator Pat Roberts and I joined U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns Monday in hosting a Farm Bill forum at the 2005 Kansas State Fair in Hutchinson. Senator Roberts, Secretary Johanns and I received input from Kansans on the development of the 2007 Farm Bill.

I appreciate Secretary Johanns visiting our State Fair and was pleased to see a number of farmers and ranchers in attendance to share their thoughts. This was a beneficial forum as it allowed the Secretary, Senator and me to hear Kansans' concerns on a wide range of agricultural issues.

We heard from participants interested in more opportunities for young farmers and ranchers and more support for

conservation and rural development programs. Others expressed concerns about the effects of high energy prices on the agriculture industry.

The issues discussed will be very helpful as we begin the process of developing the 2007 Farm Bill. I look forward to working with Secretary Johanns in the coming years to address the needs of Kansans.

I also spent time this weekend at the wrap up of the state fair visiting with Kansans. Thank you to the hundreds of people who stopped by my booth. I enjoyed the opportunity to attend and meet with fairgoers. I also want to commend and thank the Kansas State Fair board for another great fair. My wife, Robba, serves as president of the board.

Encouraging Additional Efforts to Combat Meth in Kansas

I continued my support of congressional efforts to combat methamphetamine use and production this week by joining other Members of Congress in urging House and Senate Appropriation leaders to support increased funding for Byrne-JAG programs. These programs provide Kansas drug and law enforcement officers with additional resources to combat meth production, trafficking and use.

The explosion of meth production and use is plaguing rural America. The financial burden of cleaning up meth labs is merely one aspect that falls into the hands of local law enforcement agencies. Increased funding to combat meth will help arm local officials with the tools they need to overcome this problem.

In 2005, the Kansas Bureau of Investigation reported that Kansas law enforcement officials seized 282 meth labs, ranking Kansas ninth in the nation for total meth lab seizures. Kansas has historically been among the top states in the nation in number of meth lab seizures.

Through the hard work of local officials, coupled with state and federal support, we are making progress in decreasing the number of meth labs in our state. Kansas has made significant strides in combating this drug, but still more work needs to be done.

Receiving the 2005 Kansas Pharmacists Association Board of Trustees Award

On Friday, I was presented with the 2005 Kansas Pharmacists Association Board of Trustees Award during the association's annual meeting in Lawrence. The award recognizes my support of the pharmacy profession and my advocacy of the Community Pharmacy Fairness Act. This legislation is designed to give community and independent pharmacies a more level playing field with the large pharmaceutical companies and to provide their customers with better prices.

Community pharmacies are a part of our way of life in rural Kansas. They are as much a part of our main streets as the local grocer or hardware store. I will continue to seek out opportunities to support our community pharmacists.

Deadline Approaching for U.S. Service Academy Applications

I am still accepting applications from young men and women interested in seeking nominations to the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado; the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland; the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, New York; and the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, New York. Those selected would enter the academies in June of 2005.

If nominated, applicants must then meet the individual admission requirements of each academy. The academies will make the final decision on who receives an appointment of admission. Due to limited placement, I encourage all interested candidates to apply also to the offices of U.S. Senators Sam Brownback and Pat Roberts.

The application deadline is October 1, 2005. Interested applicants should send a letter requesting application materials to:

Congressman Jerry Moran

Attn: Service Academy Selection

P.O. Box 1128

Hutchinson, KS 67504-1128

(620) 665-6138

Speaking to Fruit and Vegetable Producers about the 2007 Farm Bill

This week I spoke to the United Fruits and Vegetables Association about the importance of agricultural producers working together in the formation of the 2007 Farm Bill. I have visited California in the past to meet with fruit and vegetable producers. It is important that we recognize the needs of all producers - from corn and wheat growers to apple and tomato growers - and that I have a good understanding of all agriculture interests involved in the next Farm Bill.

National Animal Identification Program Topic of Agriculture Hearing

This week the House Agriculture Committee held a hearing on animal identification. Testifying at the hearing were representatives from Australia and Canada who have implemented animal identification systems. As the U.S. looks to create a national identification system, it is important we ensure that producers aren't harmed by high costs associated with its implementation. In addition, information must be protected, while maintaining the capability of rapid response in the event of major animal health and food safety disruptions. This hearing was a good step in the process as the USDA continues to look into the best national identification system for producers.

In the Office

This week, representatives from the National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors were in my office to discuss tax reform, savings, association health plans, life insurance and pension reform. In with the association were Bob Reynolds of Lindsborg, Jean Curry of Salina, Dorine Harter and Russ Jenkins of Emporia, Rhonda Knudson of Great Bend, Shari Walls of Bennington and Terry Beck of Overland Park.

Representatives from the Kansas Restaurant and Hospitality Association were in to talk about legal and tax reform, minimum wage and health care. Attendees were Michael Phipps, Bill Rowe and Dennis Carpenter, all of Wichita; Robert Symns and Sabrina Collins of Hays; Ron Seeber and Alan Ward of Topeka; Hugh O'Reilly of Gardner and Charlie Austin of Overland Park.

Donn Teske of Wheaton and John and Deanna Fairbanks of Onaga were in with the National Farmers Union to discuss energy policy, international trade and the agriculture budget. Also in were telephone company representatives to talk about tax breaks for small business, telecom issues and fuel prices. In with the group were Linda Yohon of Stockton and Kara and P.J. Renz of Rush Center.

In to discuss the legislative process were Kansas Farm Bureau representatives Pam Dankenbring of Linn and Kori Brown of Garden City. Speaker Doug Mays of the Kansas House of Representatives was in to talk about issues important to the Kansas State Legislature. Steve Bayless of Newton was in with the Automotive Oil Change Association to discuss current legislation pertaining to the industry.

Monty Smith of Hays was in to talk about agriculture issues. Mr. Smith was in Washington, D.C., for a leadership institute workshop. Rod Holub and Joan Spero of Manhattan were in with the Kansas State Association of Letter Carriers to discuss the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act. Harold Garrett of Wichita, representing the Veterans of Foreign Wars, also stopped by my office this week.

In my office this week for tours of the Capitol building were Cory and Melissa Cannon of Overland Park; Luis Yamamoto of Bel Aire with his parents, Alberto and Susana Yamamoto of Lima, Peru; and Jared and Julia Jost and David and Sue Baker, all of Hillsboro. Also in were Gregg Moser, retired Major and President of the Kansas Air Force Association, and his father Paul Moser of Holton.

Leticia, L.J. and Kara Alere of Hutchinson; Evangeline Clarito of Baltimore, Maryland; and Norman and Karen Owings of Hays also toured the Capitol. Members of the Department of the Army were also in, including Larry Mann of Herington, Anita Self of Manhattan, Kathryn Knox of Wamego, and Belinda Kittling, Jane Slaughter, Maia DeGuzman and Braxton Toy, all of Junction City.

Very truly yours,

Jerry