

1/15/2007 This Week in Congress

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January 15, 2007

Dear Friend,

Welcome to "This Week in Congress." [Click here](#) to read an editorial I wrote about my New Year's resolution and legislative goals for the year. I hope you find this newsletter useful.

Praising Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Kansas Native, Dr. Edward Williams

Today, our country celebrates the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. By honoring the legacy of Dr. King, we teach important lessons to generations of Americans. Our children must realize how difficult the struggle for racial justice in our society has been. We need them to know that a person of conscience and purpose can touch and lift up many lives. [Click here](#) to read an editorial I wrote about Dr. Edward Williams, a native of Ellsworth, who followed in Dr. King's footsteps. In 1941, Dr. Williams was the first African American to graduate from the University of Kansas School of Medicine. During his time at KU, Dr. Williams worked with Governor Walter Huxman and the Kansas Board of Regents to end segregation.

This Week in the House of Representatives

The Democrats continued the First 100 Hours agenda in the House this week. The House passed legislation implementing more recommendations of the 9-11 Commission. The bill requires scanning of all sea and air cargo entering the U.S. and creates a new grant program for first responders to purchase emergency communications equipment. The House also passed the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act, which provides federal funding to support embryonic stem cell research. In addition, the House passed a bill to raise the federal minimum wage. Finally, the House passed the Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act, which allows the Secretary of Health and Human Services to negotiate with pharmaceutical manufacturers for lower drug prices.

Attending the Salina Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting

This week, I attended the Salina Chamber of Commerce annual meeting. Dennis Lauver became executive director for the Chamber in October. It was good to see him and hear his goals for the upcoming year. I introduced the speaker for the evening, former Attorney General John Ashcroft, and enjoyed hearing his thoughts about the national security challenges we face as a country.

Eleventh Annual Big First Listening Tour Continues

I spent time this week in Canton, Marion, LaCrosse and Ness City visiting with Kansans. This evening, I will be in Dickinson County to attend the Chapman Lions Club meeting at Shamrock Cafe, 114 E. 4th, from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Tomorrow, I will be in Wabaunsee County at the McFarland Senior Center, 501 Main Street, from 8:30-9:30 a.m. [Click here](#) to stay up-to-date on tour stops still being scheduled.

In the Office

Bill Caton, Executive Vice President of the Kansas Equity Fund in Topeka, and I met this week to discuss legislation regarding the low income housing tax credit program and the effects of the alternative minimum tax (AMT) on affordable housing investment. Several representatives of the Kansas Association of Realtors were in to express their support for small business health plans and other issues important to realtors in Kansas. In with the group were Delores Dalke of Hillsboro, Mike McGrew of Lawrence, Sue Wenger of Mulvane, Cal Lantis of Ottawa, Cherise Sedlock of Kansas City, Brian Jones of Pittsburg, Trista Curzydlo of Wichita and Luke Bell of Topeka.

Sonny Rundell of Syracuse and Judi Miller of Topeka were in with the Kansas Department of Education to discuss the migrant worker education program and changes to No Child Left Behind. Dr. Charles Rice of Manhattan was in to talk about his involvement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Air Quality Taskforce. As a member of the taskforce, Dr. Rice serves as the Chairman of the Greenhouse Gas Subcommittee. Jim and Ruth Anne French of Partridge were in with OxFam to discuss the organization's priorities for the 2007 Farm Bill. Todd Roberts of Emporia was in with the Kansas National Education Association Student Program to advocate for reducing student loan interest rates.

Very truly yours,

Jerry