

1/29/2007 This Week in Congress

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January 29, 2007

Dear Friend,

Welcome to "This Week in Congress." Today we celebrate our state's 146th birthday. [Click here](#) to read some facts about Kansas. I hope you find this newsletter useful.

House Passes Legislation to Revoke Pensions from Convicted Lawmakers

The House passed legislation this week to strip pensions from Members of Congress who commit serious crimes during their time in office. I sponsored this legislation with other members of the Kansas delegation. Current federal law revokes pensions in cases of treason and certain espionage-related offenses. This bill would prevent lawmakers from collecting taxpayer-funded pensions accumulated during their time in Congress if convicted of a felony, such as bribery, defrauding the government or lying under oath.

Elected officials should be held to a high standard. When Members of Congress break the law and violate the trust of the people, they deserve no reward. [Click here](#) to listen to audio I recorded on this topic.

President Delivers State of the Union

On Tuesday, President George Bush delivered his annual State of the Union address. I had the opportunity to wish the President well before his speech and also to speak briefly with Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns.

Iraq is on everyone's mind and it is important we find a successful strategy to stabilize the country and bring our troops home. The President's continued focus on renewable sources of energy is a beacon of hope as we work to secure our nation and also revive our rural communities. The less dependent we are on foreign sources of oil, the safer our country will be. Renewable energy will also improve the livelihood of our small towns and build upon our strong agriculture base in Kansas. I was pleased the President also addressed health care, as it is the number one issue facing American families. I will closely examine how President Bush's plan will affect Kansans.

Kansans Mourn the Loss of World War I Veteran Jud Wagner of Smith Center

Kansans are mourning the loss of one of our state's most revered sons, World War I veteran Albert "Jud" Wagner, who passed away on Saturday, January 20 at the age of 107. Mr. Wagner resided in Smith Center and was the oldest living World War I veteran with overseas service and the oldest living Marine. He represents one of the many generations of military men and women who have so bravely served our country. It is humbling to think of all that our veterans do on our behalf. My thoughts and prayers are with the Wagner family.

Listening Tour Continues: New Stops Added for This Week

I spent time this week in Seneca, Blue Rapids and Linn. On Friday, I will be in Hoxie in Sheridan County and Oberlin in Decatur County. On Saturday, I will stop in Kinsley in Edwards County and Garfield in Pawnee County. ---Click here to view times and locations and to view other tour stops still being scheduled.

Attending Kansas Events

Hays: I attended the community fundraiser for the Humane Society of the High Plains this weekend. The Soup-R-Bowl Food Festival was held at the Ellis County Fairgrounds where 16 individuals, businesses and community groups provided soup using their favorite recipes. This is the tenth year of the event. Proceeds benefit the Humane Society.

Topeka: I spoke at the 2007 Kansas Chamber Congressional Summit on Friday in Topeka. I talked about immigration reform, national energy policy and health care. I would like to thank Andrew Jetter, CEO of the Federal Home Loan Bank in Topeka, for introducing me and Jeff Glendening and Marlee Carpenter with the Kansas Chamber for the opportunity to visit with the state's business leaders.

Lawrence: On Saturday, Robba and I attended the University of Kansas basketball game at Allen Field House. The Jayhawks defeated the Colorado Buffalos 97-74. Robba and I were guests of Provost Richard Lariviere and his wife Janis, who serves as the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Associate Director for Teacher Development.

In the Office

Fred Lucky of Topeka was in this week with the Kansas Hospital Association to discuss the reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program. Several Kansans were in representing the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses to tell me about the need to support nursing faculty and also the importance of researching post-partum depression. In with the group were Jan Kabler and Dawn Piacenza of Wichita, Mary Koehn of Andover, Jean Thome of Viola, Crystal Young of Clay Center and Shelia Colangelo of Junction City. Chuck Stones of Topeka and John Lehman of Girard were in to discuss bank issues within the farm bill reauthorization.

Llewellyn Crain of Manhattan was in representing the Kansas Arts Commission to provide an update on activities promoting the arts in Kansas. Kay Mitchell of Hill City, Donna Hudson-Hamilton of Hays, Darlene Kleist of Herington and Mary Baskett of Shawnee stopped by the office to advocate for Head Start priorities. The President of Cloud Community College, Richard Underbakke, and Dan Gerber of Concordia were in to bring me up-to-date on the college's proposed wind energy project.

Joe Kejr of Brookville, Jerry McReynolds of Woodston, Paul Penner of Hillsboro and Jay Cook of Garden City were in with the Kansas Association of Wheat Growers to present me with the 2006 Wheat Advocate Award and to discuss the upcoming farm bill. Also in were Dusti Fritz, CEO of Kansas Wheat, of Manhattan and Larry Kepley of Ulysses and Ron Suppes of Dighton representing the Kansas Wheat Commission. Larry Dreiling of Hays, field editor for the High Plains Journal, was also in with the group. Matt Hickman of Topeka, John Petersen and Frank Ross of Kansas City, and Doug Farmer of Topeka also stopped by the office this week to visit.

Kansas Right to Life representatives visited the Capitol to advocate for pro-life legislation and the rights of the unborn, as well as to participate in the Right to Life March. In with the group were Elmer and Audrey Feldkamp of Baileyville; Audrey Turkovic and Carolyn Culp of Council Grove; Steve and Mary Kay Ricke of Wichita; Bob Giebler of Valley Center; Betty Wood of Haviland; John Burke, Tom Burke and Chris Wyller of Kansas City; Marilyn Malleck of Ness City; David Betzen, Amy Betzen, Nancy Wyant and Terry Wyant of Wichita; Adam Malleck and Andrew Malleck of Topeka; Martina Arnoldy of Tipton; Wanda Tabor of Hays; and Kenneth, Margaret, Michael and Tim Mans of Goddard.

Very truly yours,

Jerry