

10/22/2007 This Week in Congress

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October 22, 2007

Dear Friend,

Welcome to "This Week in Congress." This week the House passed legislation to update and improve safety standards for railroad workers, as well as a bill to improve accountability for contractors working in Iraq and Afghanistan. Also this week, I added my name to a measure that would force House leaders to bring the Broadcaster Freedom Act to a vote in the House. I hope you find this newsletter useful.

Supporting the Expansion of Solar Power and Renewable Energy

A group of Kansas State University students were in our nation's capital this week participating in a competition where teams design, build and operate homes powered entirely by the sun. I visited the team Thursday at the 2007 Solar Decathlon to tour their home and learn more about solar-powered technology. The students talked to me about how their home makes efficient use of technologies to power everything needed for everyday life. My visit to K-State's solar-powered home comes a week after I visited BMK Plumbing and Solar of the Midwest, a Salina-based company specializing in solar systems.

Also this week, the House passed legislation I sponsored calling on the United States to secure 25 percent of its energy from renewable sources by 2025. The 25x'25 initiative encourages the expansion of solar energy, wind power and biofuels. Utilizing renewable resources in a responsible fashion is good for the environment, good for the Kansas economy and helps move our nation toward energy independence.

Thanks to Dean of the College of Architecture, Planning and Design Dennis Law; Professor Todd Gabbard; and Director of Development Bruce Broce for allowing me to come and visit with their students. [Click here to view photos from the event.](#)

Community Pharmacy Legislation Moving through the House of Representatives

Community pharmacies are an integral part of our way of life in Kansas. This week in Washington, D.C., the Judiciary Committee Antitrust Task Force conducted a hearing about the impact of antitrust laws on community pharmacies. The hearing focused on legislation I introduced with Congressman Anthony Weiner of New York. H.R. 971, the Community Pharmacy Fairness Act, would allow independent pharmacies to band together and utilize their increased buying power to purchase prescription drugs at a more competitive rate. This legislation would help our Kansas pharmacists reduce their business overhead and curtail the rising cost of prescription drugs. I am pleased the committee took time to examine the merits of this legislation and will continue working to see that it is brought before the House of Representatives for a vote.

Discussing No Child Left Behind with Kansas Superintendents

On Wednesday, I participated in a conference call with the Kansas Board of Education Council of Superintendents during their meeting in Garden City. We discussed the reauthorization timeline of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law and the current mood in Washington, D.C. I was pleased to hear comments and feedback on the priorities of Kansas schools.

More than 1,100 Kansans have already registered their opinions on how NCLB is working in an online poll on my Web site. If you have not yet cast your vote, I encourage you to do so at www.jerrymoran.house.gov/.

Building upon the Successes of the Clean Water Act

This year marks the 35th anniversary of the Clean Water Act. In a hearing on Thursday, the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee highlighted the successes of this law and examined what must be done to build upon those successes. The Clean Water Act improved water quality standards and helped clean polluted waterways throughout our country. The legislation was also responsible for creating a model wastewater infrastructure system. Those facilities are now aging and investment is needed to help bring that technology into the 21st century.

Agriculture Committee Discusses Structural Changes in the Ag Economy

The House Agriculture Committee heard from three economists this week about structural changes occurring within the agricultural sector. Much of the discussion centered on how agricultural markets have adjusted to the increased demand for biofuels. The economists also talked about the rising production costs of fuel, fertilizers, pesticides and other inputs. I had the opportunity to ask Dr. Keith Collins, U.S. Department of Agriculture Chief Economist, about the impact that closed markets to U.S. beef continue to have on cattle markets and the recent Brazil cotton case ruling from the World Trade Organization against the U.S.

Participating in the Groundbreaking for Redbud Village in Plainville

This weekend, I participated in the groundbreaking for a new assisted living facility in my hometown of Plainville. Redbud Village will serve as a much needed, long-term care center serving Rooks County and the surrounding areas. During the summers of my youth, I had the opportunity to make a little money mowing the lawns of the Rooks County Home, which is now known as Redbud Court.

I was honored to be included in the ceremony alongside State Senator Ralph Ostmeyer and State Representative Dan Johnson. Special thanks to Redbud Village Administrator Fontella Fant for the invitation and to Rooks County Commission Chairman Pat Hageman for his kind introduction.

Welcoming McPherson Chamber of Commerce Men to Washington, D.C.

Men from the McPherson Chamber of Commerce were in Washington, D.C., this week for their annual trip, in which they travel to a major U.S. city to tour industry and development. The women of the Chamber also have an annual trip and this spring will travel to Chicago. I enjoyed seeing many friends from McPherson. Traveling with the group were Homer Copeland, Robert Moore, Brent Milleson, Matt Morrow, Carmon Heidebrecht, Charles Singleton, Glen Ball, Gary Hess, John Rader, James Melland, Gerald Meng, Jim LaDuke, Jim Ruble, John Heidebrecht, Keith Janzen, Kelly Vogtz, Larry Shotts, Larry Smith, Leonard Zeitlow, Marck Cobb, Max Streit, Rodney Gieselman, Michael Brownsberger, Paul Katzer, Ralph Heidebrecht, Ronald Robben, Scott Achenbach, Steven Mulch, Theodore McVay, Thomas Chandler, Troy Glidden, Chris Wallace, Scott Werth, James Leach, Jerritt Colwell, Rodney Martin and Kris Hanschu.

K-State's Beach Museum of Art Celebrates New Wing and Exhibitions

Art plays an important role in the lives of Kansans, and we are lucky to have access to the many fine works displayed at Kansas State University's Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art. Robba and I serve as members of the Board of Visitors for the museum, which is named after Ross and Marianna Kistler Beach of Hays. The museum primarily focuses on Kansas and features thousands of pieces of art.

On Friday, I joined fellow board members in Manhattan to discuss progress at the museum. Over the weekend, the museum celebrated the opening of a new wing - the Mary and Morgan Jarvis Wing - and new exhibitions. I commend Museum Director Lorne Render for the continued growth and excellence of the museum.

Discussing Banking Issues with Tonganoxie's First State Bank and Trust President

En route to the airport on Monday, I stopped in Tonganoxie to meet with longtime friend Kent Neeham, President of First State Bank and Trust. I have known Kent since his time as a banker in Great Bend. I enjoyed the opportunity to visit about issues important to bankers and to get a picture of what is going on in the Tonganoxie community.

In the Office

Mike Terry, Cheryl Manson, Charles Grimwood and Dennis Lauver of Salina; Fred Lucky and Tom Bell of Topeka; Roger John of Phillipsburg; Terry Lambert of Emporia; John Jeter of Hays; and Dick Allen of Manhattan were in with the Kansas

Hospital Association to discuss physician recruitment and the challenges of operating public hospitals. John Owen, Frank Schnapp, Tom Zacharias and Bob Parkenson of Overland Park were in with National Crop Insurance Services to talk about their study of profitability in crop insurance and to share with me how it compares with the reporting methods used by the Government Accountability Office. Dr. Linda Redford, Director of the Central Plains Geriatric Education Center in Kansas City, was in to discuss the need to provide specialized education to professionals who care for geriatric patients.

Johnny Taylor of Manhattan and Tauna Spain of Topeka were in representing Flint Hills Job Corps to tell me about the success of the Job Corps in equipping young Kansans with skills and knowledge to succeed in the workplace. John Thaemert of Sylvan Grove, President of the National Association of Wheat Growers, and Dana Peterson of Manhattan, representing the Kansas Association of Wheat Growers, were in to discuss farm bill proposals being considered in the U.S. Senate. Scott Taylor of Garden City and Sharon Lind and Sister Peggy Martin of Great Bend were in to talk to me about rural health care needs. Special Agent Jeff Brandau with the Kansas Bureau of Investigation stopped in to discuss the Kansas Top Gun Training program and the development of a state tracking system for pseudoephedrine sales to prevent methamphetamine production.

Andy Schlapp, Eric Sexton and Scott Schneider of Wichita were in representing Sedgwick County interests to tell me about the continuing need for investment in a training facility in Wichita so that the aviation industry has reliable access to skilled workers. Kim Larrick and Kara McBurney of Overland Park were in representing the Kansas March of Dimes Chapter to discuss the State Children's Health Insurance Program and their support for federal programs for prenatal care and care for premature babies. CEO Shelley Duncan of Newton was in with Youthville to provide an update on the renovation of the dining facility at its Dodge City campus.

Several Kansans visited my office this week for a tour of the U.S. Capitol building, including Jesse Manning of Manhattan, Linda Manning of Kanopolis, Gary and Frances Summers of Vassar, Carl and Brenda Johnson of Atlanta and Eileen Baerg of Salina. In from Beloit were Curt and Joann Norris and Delbert and Janice Bryan. Richard and Anna Gudenkauf of Topeka, Ross and Marjorie Kos of Marysville, Dale and Shirley Lind of Concordia, Carl and Mary Stepp of Smith Center and Gerald and Luetta Kaiser of Hays were also in for a tour. Richard and Lana Montgomery and Tom and Sharon Kessler were also in from Wichita.

Very truly yours,

Jerry