



CARTER COURIER

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APRIL 27, 2007

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 8

LETTER FROM THE CONGRESSMAN

Dear Friends,

This week the House and Senate passed the conference report to the Fiscal Year 2007 emergency war supplemental spending bill. Unfortunately the Democrats in Congress continue to play politics with this vital piece of legislation by loading it full of pork. The president has said he will veto this bill and demand a clean funding bill for our men and women in uniform.

In addition to passing an emergency war supplemental bill, it is vitally important that Democrats in Congress make good on their promise to provide ethics and lobbying reform. Too many loopholes and inconsistencies remain in the broken House ethics rules, yet little effort has been shown by Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi to correct these problems.

I again look forward to announcing that a representative from my staff will hold office hours in Coryell County next week for residents who need assistance with casework issues. Details are included in this newsletter.

I thank all of you in the 31st District for the opportunity to serve you in Congress and look forward to the work that lies ahead in the coming days.

Until next week,



FIXING MEDICARE & SOCIAL SECURITY

This week the Social Security and Medicare Board of Trustees released their annual report revealing deepening concern for maintaining the health of these programs. It's been said too many times without being heard – Social Security and Medicare are dying.

House Republicans created an early warning system as part of the Medicare drug benefit of 2003 that would tell us when Medicare and Social Security were running out of money. We required that trustees issue a "Medicare funding warning" when they project in consecutive years that the Medicare trust fund was getting too low. This warning was to address the substantiated concern about the programs' future growth and its impact on defense, education and other budget priorities.

More than 43 million elderly and disabled people will rely on Medicare this year for their health insurance coverage. The program will cost an estimated \$436 billion. It is paid for with a mix of payroll taxes, general revenue, premiums and state payments. Medicare costs are growing at a rate of about 6.5 percent per year. The growth stems from enrollment increases as well as health

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care inflation, which tends to outpace overall inflation.

If these numbers are cause for concern, then add the 78 million Americans who will enter retirement in the coming decades and it quickly becomes a financial crisis. There has never been greater need for action – or reform.

These millions of Americans will rightfully be looking for the healthcare and Social Security benefits they earned during their years of hard work. But currently, without action or reform, there will be no “pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.” The system will go belly up in the next few decades.

House Democrats have said they will not act on this impending crisis, but rather pass the buck for the next five years. In their Fiscal Year 2008 budget, Democrats put off any reform of the Medicare and Social Security systems until at least 2012. As they ignore these problems, the runaway spending that continues to eat up more and more of the federal coffers will continue to worsen as more Americans begin to rely on Medicare and Social Security.

In an even more audacious move, Rep. Pete Stark, chairman of the health subcommittee for the House Ways and Means Committee, said he will work this year to pass legislation that does away with the warning system. What does eliminating the early warning system achieve? If Democrats don’t want to face the realities of this crisis, than eliminating the system we put in place to warn of the crises is not a responsible option. The perpetual tendency of the Democratic leadership to hit the snooze button on pressing issues is dangerous. Even more, it’s laziness – not leadership.

American workers and their families have waited too long and worked too hard to pay into these programs for their government to ignore this coming storm. I will encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to address this issue – not ignore it. We have a responsibility to address this crisis today. We should not ignore it and leave a bigger problem for our children and grandchildren. As always, God bless the 31st District of Texas.

FIRE PREVENTION GRANT FOR THE CITY OF KILLEEN

This last week I had the pleasure of announcing that the City of Killeen Fire Department has received a \$28,407 grant for fire prevention initiatives. The funding was awarded through the Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency’s FY2006 Fire Prevention & Safety program (FP&S).

This grant will prove extremely beneficial in helping the Killeen Fire Department prevent unnecessary deaths and injuries caused by fire hazards. The men and women of the Killeen Fire Department should be commended for protecting their community; I am pleased their hard work is being recognized and they were selected to receive this grant to further enhance their efforts.

The FP&S program awards funds to high-risk target groups in order to diminish the high rate of incidences of fire-related deaths and injuries. FP&S is a part of DHS’s Assistance to Firefighters grant program, which enhances the safety of the public and firefighters with respect to fire and fire-related hazards.

LISTEN TO MY WEEKLY RADIO ADDRESS

Please click on the link below to listen to my most recent weekly radio address that was sent to local radio and television stations. This installment covers the continuing debate in Congress regarding the effects of the pork-laden Emergency War Supplemental on the troops in Iraq.

<http://carter.house.gov/multimedia/>

**LEGISLATION CONVEYING
MARLIN VA HOSPITAL TO STATE OF TEXAS**

Two weeks ago I was proud to introduce H.R. 1879 into the House of Representatives. This bill would convey the vacant Thomas T. Connally Department of Veterans Administration Medical Center in Marlin, which has been closed since 2002, to the State of Texas.

By finding the appropriate use for this property, this deal could prove to be an economic boon to Marlin and Falls County. Numerous jobs would be created by re-opening this facility.

Members of the Texas legislature have previously attempted to acquire this property. Initial propositions for the facility, now unoccupied for several years, include a correctional facility and criminal justice hospital.

Although the Senate version of the 2007 Supplemental Budget includes provisions to convey the land to Texas, I introduced this bill at the request of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs so that the deal may still be approved if it is removed from the Supplemental.

**DEMOCRATS SETTING
DATE FOR AMERICAN SURRENDER IN IRAQ**

On Wednesday I spoke out against the revised emergency war supplemental presented in the House of Representatives. While the most controversial pork barrel spending contained in the original supplemental the House passed on March 23 has been removed, \$29 billion of unrelated domestic spending can still be found in the conference report. In addition, while the original supplemental called for a redeployment of troops to begin no later than next March, the conference report calls for troop withdrawal to be mostly completed by that time.

Our commanders in Iraq deserve to have the resources and flexibility they need to lead our troops in harm's way during this critical phase of their mission. The unrelated domestic spending that still remains in this supplemental, even after the President continues to promise to veto it, are priorities that should be addressed during the normal budget process.

Every day the Democrats play these games in Washington is another day we leave our troops stranded in the Middle East without the reinforcements they need. I believe our soldiers when they say the war is not lost, and we must give our military the resources it needs to win.

By accelerating the timetable by which American troops would withdraw from Iraq, we are admitting defeat and giving al-Qaeda the date we will surrender. I shudder to think about the security of our nation once we hand over victory this to our enemy.

STAFF TO HOST CONSTITUENT SERVICE HOURS IN CORYELL COUNTY

A representative from my office will hold office hours in Coryell County on Thursday, May 3. The representative will meet with residents to listen to their concerns and provide assistance with federal agencies and issues, including social security, veterans' affairs, citizenship and immigration. Details follow:

Thursday, May 3, 2007
8:30 - 11:30am
Copperas Cove Chamber of Commerce – Conference Room
204 E. Robertson Ave.
Copperas Cove, TX, 76522