



# CARTER COURIER

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## LETTER FROM THE CONGRESSMAN

Dear Friends,

Recently, House Republicans imposed new accountability and transparency standards upon ourselves regarding the Congressional earmark process. In addition, Democrats were invited to join Republicans in a one year moratorium while a special committee reviews the entire process, but Democrats have refused to accept this offer. I have included more details of this proposed agreement inside.

In addition, Congress two weeks ago passed a 15-day extension of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) which includes critical intelligence-gathering provisions that were set to expire on February 1st. These provisions allow our intelligence community to keep pace with terrorist who wish to use the newest technology in an effort to do us harm. This week Congress must act to make this law permanent.

As always, I thank all of you in the 31st District for the opportunity to serve you in Congress and I look forward to advancing the conservative principles that make Central Texas so great.

Until next week,



## TRAVELERS MAY FIND NEW PASSPORT REGULATIONS

Spring break is just around the corner and for many Texans its time to pack their bags and head someplace sunny. For those of you planning to travel outside of the United States, make sure you have the right documentation on hand.

There are many rumors circulating about exactly what you need to vacation outside of the U.S. Right now, passports are required when flying into or out of the United States. According to the Houston Passport Agency, passports are not required for all cruises, but there are many cruise lines that require their passengers to present a passport. If you are planning on taking a cruise this spring break or summer, check with the cruise ship about their passport policy in plenty of time.

Passports are not required when crossing the Mexican or Canadian borders on foot, by car, or bus. In the past, travelers across our land borders were allowed to make an oral declaration as to their citizenship. It is important to note that this is no longer the case. All adult travelers will be required to present proof of citizenship, such as a birth certificate, and proof of identity, such as a driver's license, when entering the U.S. through land or sea ports of entry. Children under the age of 18 will need to present proof of citizen-

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As early as June 2009, laws for land and sea travel could change. The new laws would require that most U.S. citizens entering the U.S. by land or sea must have either a U.S. passport; a U.S. passport card; a trusted traveler card such as NEXUS, FAST, or SENTRI; a valid Merchant Mariner Document when traveling in conjunction with official maritime business; or a valid U.S. Military ID when traveling on official orders.

The rules have changed for children under the age of 16 as well. According to the Department of State, all minors must appear in person when applying for a passport and both parents or a child's legal guardian must present evidence of the child's U.S. citizenship, present evidence that they are the parents or guardian, show valid personal identification, and sign and take an oath before an authorized passport acceptance agent. If the second parent is not available to sign, the appearing parent must also present evidence of sole legal custody of the child, or notarized written consent of the other parent for the issuance of the passport, or provide a written statement explaining why non-applying parent's consent cannot be obtained.

If you are planning to travel anywhere outside the United States anytime soon, I would highly encourage you to apply for a passport as soon as possible, and have it expedited if you are traveling abroad over spring break. Assisting constituents with passport requests is one of the many services my district offices provide. If you need assistance, please feel free to call my Round Rock office at 512-246-1600. For more information and additional passport assistance, please visit <http://www.travel.state.gov>.

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### **CITY OF BERKELEY RECEIVES CONGRESSIONAL CONDEMNATION**

Last week I reaffirmed my commitment to our men and women in uniform by cosponsoring two bills condemning the actions taken by the City of Berkeley, California against the United States Marines.

The "Semper Fi Act" rescinds all funding contained in the Omnibus spending bill for the City of Berkeley, California and any entities located in Berkeley and transfers those funds to the Marines. This bill, introduced by Rep. John Campbell (CA-48), is in response to a recent Berkeley City Council vote to tell the Marines to close their recruiting station in the city. The second bill I cosponsored is a resolution reaffirming the commitment of the United States House of Representatives to the patriotic and professional men and women serving in the United States Marine Corps while condemning the City of Berkeley.

I am both shocked and outraged that an American city would so blatantly turn their backs on our military men and women. As we speak, these men and women are fighting and will continue to fight for the safety of all Americans, including those that live in Berkeley, California whether they appreciate it or not. I believe that any American city that refuses access to our nation's military should also be willing to forgo any assistance from our government entirely.

During the meeting, the Berkeley City Council voted to give protest group Code Pink a parking space in front of the recruiting office once a week for six months and a free sound permit for protesting once a week. According to the City Council agenda, they "Encourage all people to avoid cooperation with the Marine Corps recruiting station, and applaud residents and organizations such as Code Pink, that may volunteer to impede, passively or actively, by nonviolent means, the work of any military recruiting office located in the City of Berkeley."

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### **FUNDS FOR KILLEEN WATER INFRASTRUCTURE**

I am proud to announce that \$500,000 has been included in the 2008 Omnibus spending bill for new sewer and water infrastructure for the City of Killeen.

Killeen is exploding with new residents and our water and sewer systems must be able to keep up with the growing population and increased needs. I am proud to have secured these funds for critical new infrastructure that will provide for a sewer and water system to serve the new police headquarters in Killeen.

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## DEMS BLOCK VOTE TO CLEAN UP EARMARK PROCESS

House Democrats recently blocked a vote on earmark reform that would have fundamentally changed the way Congress does earmarks by adopting an immediate moratorium on all earmarks while new reforms are being considered.

Congress had an opportunity to fundamentally change the way we do business in Washington by reforming the earmark process. Unfortunately, Nancy Pelosi and her liberal allies refused to allow the House of Representatives to vote on this reform and fix the broken earmark process.

The American people expect this Congress to mend a broken Washington, and we need to begin with the earmark process, the poster child of a corrupt Washington. Republicans have made it very clear that the war for true earmark reform will not stop today. We will continue to force votes on this issue until the earmark process is fixed for good.

On January 25th Republican leaders sent Speaker Pelosi (D-CA) a letter calling on her to join House Republicans and adopting an immediate moratorium on earmarks and to appoint a bipartisan, bicameral joint committee to reform the earmark process. The GOP leaders asked Speaker Pelosi to respond to the request by February 1, 2008-the end of the House Democratic Caucus retreat. In the letter, House Republicans also outlined a series of earmark reform standards they will adopt immediately, including:

- No more “monuments to me.” Lawmakers should not use taxpayer money to fund projects named after themselves.
- No more “airdrops.” The process by which Congress spends the American people’s money should be completely transparent. Members of Congress should not circumvent transparency by airdropping earmarks into bills after the Congress already voted on the bill.
- No “fronts” (no pass-through entities). Taxpayer funds should not be laundered through “front” operations that mask their true recipients.
- Members of Congress who request earmarks should put forth a plan detailing exactly how the money will be spent and why they believe the use of taxpayer funding is justified. Members of Congress who “secure” earmarks should place these plans in the Congressional Record well in advance of floor votes on those earmarks.
- To improve accountability, Members of Congress should require outside earmark recipients to put up “matching funds” where applicable so that American taxpayers do not bear all the risk for such expenditures and to prove that there is local support for the project.
- The Executive Branch should be held accountable for its own earmark practices. The Executive Branch asks for earmarks, too, and has done so under administrations Democratic and Republican alike. Members of Congress should hold present and future Administrations accountable for the way in which taxpayer-funded earmarks are used.

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## ROUND ROCK RESIDENT HONORED WITH FULBRIGHT GRANT

Last week I proudly announced that Brian Korgel of Round Rock has been awarded A Fulbright grant award to study, lecture, teach, or conduct research abroad during the 2007-2008 academic year.

I am proud to represent students like Brian here in the 31st district of Texas and I congratulate him on his great achievement. The Fulbright Program gives great opportunity for our students to experience the different cultures of the world.

The Fulbright Program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Established by Congress in 1946, the Program’s purpose is to build mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the rest of the world. Fulbright recipients are selected on the basis of academic or professional achievement, as well as demonstrated leadership potential.

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