



CARTER COURIER

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LETTER FROM THE CONGRESSMAN

Dear Friends,

I hope that all of you are enjoying a blessed and happy New Year. I enjoyed my time away from Washington while spending it with family, friends and constituents in Central Texas.

As Congress reconvenes, it will be important that we lose no time in accomplishing the pressing business of the American people. One such issue is permanently amending the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) to include critical intelligence-gathering provisions that are set to expire in February unless Congress acts. 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.

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,



THE DIGITAL TELEVISION CONVERSION

On February 17, 2009 federal law will require that all full-power television broadcast stations broadcast only in digital format. For consumers, this will mean that every television set will need to be digital television (DTV). While February 2009 may seem far away, broadcasters are working to prepare the public ahead of time to help consumers get the equipment they need in order to successfully complete the DTV transition.

Many people are wondering why this change is necessary. Congress mandated the conversion to all-digital broadcasting in order to free up frequencies for public safety communications. Digital television is also a more efficient transmission technology and it will allow broadcast stations to offer improved picture and sound quality. The conversion will also allow broadcasters to offer more programming options for consumers.

The transition from analog to digital broadcasting will affect over 34 million households and 70 million television sets. However, changing to the digital signal will not require every consumer to purchase a new television set or subscribe to HDTV. Consumers who receive programming through an antenna will only need a

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digital-to-analog converter box that will be available in stores early this year. Coupons are being offered by the National Telecommunications Administration to help pay for the cost of the converter box. Information about the coupon program can be found at www.dtv2009.gov or by calling 1-888-DTV-2009.

Consumers who have recently purchased television sets may be able to avoid having to purchase digital-to-analog converter. As of March 17, 2007, all television receivers shipped in the United States must contain a digital tuner. Additionally, as of May 25, 2007, the Federal Communications Commission requires sellers of television receiving equipment that does not include a digital tuner to disclose at the point-of-sale that the device does not include a digital tuner. Retailers are required to inform consumers if they are selling equipment that is not compatible with the digital transition.

Individuals who subscribe to cable or satellite TV services should continue to receive their programming after the February 19 deadline. However, consumers are encouraged to check with their service providers to see if they will be provided with additional compatibility equipment. I encourage anyone seeking more information about the DTV transition to visit <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/digitaltv.html>.

THE ECONOMIC GROWTH ACT OF 2008

This week I co-sponsored the Economic Growth Act of 2008 as introduced by the fiscally conservative Republican Study Committee (RSC). The act is designed to provide much-needed, incentive-based relief to job creators in order to spur widespread economic growth.

I applaud Chairman Hensarling, a fellow Texan, on his dedication to producing a bill for an economic growth package that will put our economy back on track. It is clear that stimulating our economy must consist of tax relief for small businesses and middle-class families, not increased federal spending that will only burden American families and continue to send our economy on a downhill path.

The Economic Growth Package of 2008 contains four major provisions:

- **Full, Immediate Expensing.** The bill would allow all businesses to immediately expense-or fully deduct on their tax returns-the costs of assets (including buildings) they purchase for their business in the year that they buy such assets. Under current law, businesses can only take limited deductions in pieces, over several years. By uncapping and accelerating the expensing, this provision would encourage the purchase of assets with which to grow a business.
 - **Significant Reduction in the Top Corporate Tax Rate.** The bill would immediately cut the top corporate income tax rate from 35% to 25%, aligning it with the average rate in the European Union. By allowing businesses to keep more of the money they earn, this provision would encourage the expansion of businesses, the hiring of more workers, and an acceleration of investment, while making American companies more competitive internationally.
 - **End the Capital Gains Tax on Inflation.** The bill would index for inflation the cost basis used when calculating the capital gains tax on assets acquired before the end of 2008. Under current law, the capital gains tax is based on the difference in the original purchase price of the asset and the sale price of the asset. However, some of this difference, or "gain," can be attributed to inflation. By effectively reducing the amount of a gain that is taxable, this provision would encourage the movement of capital in 2008 and spur voluminous economic investment.
 - **Simplify the Capital Gains Rate Structure.** The bill would allow corporations to benefit from the 15% capital gains rate. Under current law, individuals pay a top capital gains rate of 15%, but corporations are subject to a 35% top rate. By encouraging corporations to sell unwanted assets, this provision would unleash funds and materials with which to create jobs and grow the economy.
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STATEMENT ON SUSTAINMENT OF SCHIP VETO

This week I issued the following statement after voting to sustain the President's veto on the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP).

"The Democrats SCHIP bill is a bad bill that expands a program intended to cover poor children to include adults and in some states children in families who earn four times the poverty level. The bill also loosens previous citizenship requirements making it easier for illegal aliens to receive American taxpayer funded healthcare. I believe we should focus on providing poor children with health insurance first. Now that the veto has been sustained, I hope we can work in a bi-partisan manner on a compromise that will ensure America's most vulnerable get the coverage they need."

FUNDS FOR WILLIAMSON COUNTY REGIONAL WATER REUSE SYSTEM

This week I was proud to announce that \$250,000 has been included in the 2008 Omnibus spending bill for the Williamson County Regional Water Reuse System.

Williamson County is exploding with new residents and our water system must be able to keep up with the growing population and increased water needs. It is critical that we conserve our water supply and uncover new, clean and environmentally safe solutions to re-use our current water supply.

Cities in Williamson County have indicated the need to construct new or additional wastewater effluent reuse projects to supplement Williamson County's water supply. In order to stretch available clean water resources, the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) is proposing to combine several current and future projects into a Williamson County Regional Reuse System.

The 2008 Omnibus spending bill passed the House and the Senate in 2007 and was signed into law by the President late last year.

FUNDING FOR TEXAS WATER ALLOCATION ASSESSMENT

I was also proud this week to announce that \$713,000 has been included in the 2008 Omnibus spending bill for the Texas Water Development Board to conduct a Texas Water Allocation Assessment.

Texas is booming and our water system must be able to keep up with the growing population and increased water needs. I am proud to have secured these funds for a critical assessment that will help the Texas Water Board plan for the future water needs of our state.

In 2001, Congress stated that the Texas Water Allocation Assessment will enable the Corps of Engineers to assist water regions in determining if existing water can be better allocated to support more balanced water use for future needs. Texas regional water planning groups are working together to explore water supply opportunities in Texas to meet the state's future water requirements.
