



Congressman

Jim Sensenbrenner



News From Congress

NUMBER 169 JANUARY 2006

Establishing Democracy in Iraq

It never gets old. The sight of ink-stained fingers, representing one of the greatest signs of progress on earth – the ability of men and women in Iraq who last month came out to express themselves with the simple act of voting, in a democratic environment. To be sure, many Americans take this privilege for granted, for we have long enjoyed it. But for the Iraqis, who until recently had no such option available to them, December 15, 2005, was a day of joy, pride, and independence.

Free elections are sure signs of progress in the War on Terror, for where there is democracy, there are freedom-loving men and women who will stand up to the cowardice of terrorists. In fighting the War on Terror, we face brutal fanatics who celebrate murder, who incite suicide, and who stop at nothing to destroy the liberties we cherish.

But despite their best efforts, phenomenal progress is happening in Iraq. There are more than 90 Iraqi army battalions fighting the terrorists alongside our troops. As the Iraqi security forces gain strength and experience, the U.S. can lessen its troop presence without losing the capability to effectively defeat the terrorists. In two-and-a-half years, Iraq has experienced a peaceful turnover of sovereignty to the people, a nationally elected transitional government, the popular ratification of a constitution, and just last month, the first Iraqi elected constitutional government.

This is a remarkable transformation for a country that has virtually no experience with democracy, and is struggling to overcome the legacy of one of the worst tyrannies the world has known. I congratulate the Iraqis on their willpower and determination, and I thank our troops, each and every single member, whose service and sacrifice have made this possible.



U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, Representative Sensenbrenner, and House Homeland Security Chairman Peter King answer questions about the PATRIOT Act at a Press Conference in December, 2005.

The PATRIOT Act - Revisited

December marked the House of Representatives' strong commitment to protecting Americans from terror on the home front, by renewing the PATRIOT Act. As of the time this article was written, the Senate, which had already failed to pass the legislation once, was still considering a filibuster of the bill, leaving uncertain the final outcome of its passage.

I authored the PATRIOT Act in 2001 and once again last year. My bill provides law enforcement with the same tools to combat terrorism they have had for decades in fighting street crime and fraud. It also ensures that our intelligence and law enforcement officers have the necessary means to protect Americans by assisting in the detection, disruption, and dismantling of terrorist cells before they can murder more innocent civilians. Since September 11th, federal terrorism investigations have resulted in charges against more than 400 suspects across the nation, with more than half of them being convicted. Law enforcement has broken up terror cells in New York, Oregon, Virginia, and Florida, and convicted operatives in California, Texas, New Jersey, Illinois, North Carolina, and Ohio.

I understand there are those with concerns that these tools have been, and will be abused; however, through aggressive oversight by Congress and the Justice Department's independent Inspector General, there has not been a single instance of abuse stemming from PATRIOT Act authorities. Nevertheless, in order to prevent any possible abuses in the future, my bill makes important modifications by enhancing congressional and judicial oversight. Americans' freedom from terrorist attacks will not be bought by sacrificing liberty.

December 2005 represented a turning point in world events. Unfortunately, our successes in Iraq have been tempered by the Senate's actions relative to the PATRIOT Act. While I still remain hopeful for a positive and successful outcome, I must stress that in the event the Senate fails our nation by not passing the PATRIOT Act, there **will** be a hole in our national security, and we will revert to the same insufficient defenses from terrorism that were in place before September 11, 2001.



A Growing Economy...and Shrinking Deficit

By most measures, the state of our nation's economy is booming. Just look at November's numbers: job growth continues, hourly earnings have increased, consumer confidence is up, unemployment is at 5%, and even the manufacturing sector is experiencing growth. All this after the devastating effects of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma. Yet, in an effort to tear down this economy for their own partisan gain, some of my colleagues have chosen to deny the obvious.

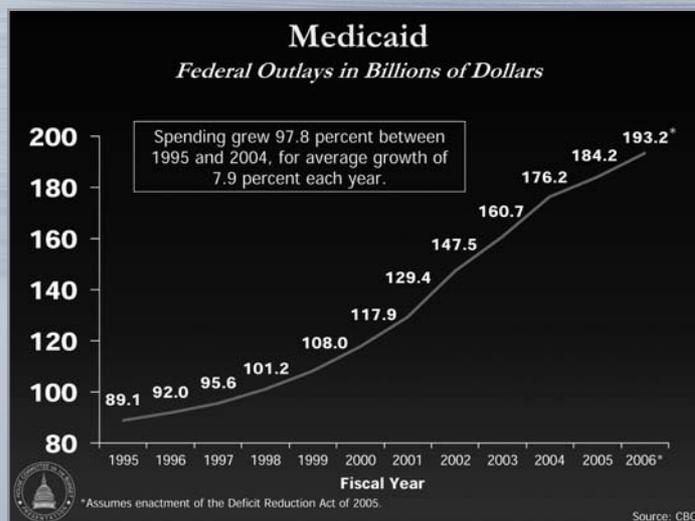
Our robust economy is a reflection of, among other things, the tax relief proposed by President Bush in 2003, which Congress passed shortly thereafter. Opposition to this relief, much of which will expire in the coming years unless Congress acts, endangers our economic growth. I support continuing this common-sense tax relief and hope Congress will address this issue this year.

Similarly, we must also address our budget deficit, otherwise, this too could jeopardize our economy. The House of Representatives did just that at the end of 2005 with the passage of H.R. 4241, the Deficit Reduction Act. This overdue bill, which I support, tackles our growing deficit problem by trimming \$50 billion off the deficit and providing much-needed reform to inefficient government programs.

One program in dire need of reform is Medicaid. This program has grown at such a rapid rate, that it makes up the largest percentage of states' budgets. In its present form, Medicaid has expanded beyond sustainability, which is why a bipartisan group of governors drafted recommendations to reform Medicaid earlier this year. These recommendations were incorporated into H.R. 4241 and will provide \$11.8 billion in savings. Despite the claims of those opposed, people benefiting from Medicaid will be relieved to know that under this bill, **money for this program will continue to grow at a rate of seven percent.**

The Deficit Reduction Act also modernizes student aid programs. As an increasing number of Americans are investing in their educational future, student loan programs have expanded considerably. To continue to provide assistance to students, these programs must be run more efficiently, and waste should be weeded out. H.R. 4241 reduces loan fees and collection costs, and in doing so, provides roughly \$14.5 billion in savings to taxpayers over the next five years.

Contrary to the rants of those opposed to this bill, H.R. 4241 is not a budget-cut bill; it is a budget-deficit bill. This is an important distinction because it highlights the fact that Congress can reduce the deficit without cutting people's benefits. The Deficit Reduction Act is an important step towards moving us closer to a balanced budget. I look forward to continuing our work this year to find additional solutions to further reduce wasteful federal spending.



New Benefit Available for America's Seniors

From now until May 15, 2006, seniors can sign up for the new Medicare prescription drug benefit. Congress created this voluntary benefit, which began on January 1st of this year, through the Medicare Modernization Act (MMA) of 2003. A Medicaid waiver extension was also granted through mid-2007 to allow those who choose to do so to remain in Wisconsin's SeniorCare program.

As with any new government program, questions have arisen about the prescription drug benefit. Some critics argue it is under funded, while others have suggested that its implementation be delayed. I have always made it clear that though I voted in favor of the MMA, it isn't perfect. For America's seniors, something is better than nothing, and seniors are counting on this program to help with escalating prescription drug costs.

Seniors who have questions, concerns, or encounter difficulties signing up for the program, should feel free to contact Congressman Sensenbrenner for assistance at 262-784-1111 or 800-242-1119.

TOWN HALL MEETINGS

I host scores of Town Hall Meetings and Office Hours to provide you with the opportunity to express your views on the issues before Congress or to help you with problems you may be experiencing in dealing with a federal agency. My schedule of meetings for the next several weeks is listed below and my office hours are listed on the back of this mailer. I invite you to attend one or more of them.

Whether you need help or not, I hope you'll stop by to say hello and introduce yourself. Please contact my district office if you require special accommodations to attend.

Thursday, January 19th

7:00pm New Berlin City Hall

Saturday, January 21st

9:00am Oconomowoc City Hall

1:00pm Richfield Town Hall

Sunday, January 22nd

1:00pm Whitefish Bay Village Hall

7:00pm Brookfield Public Safety Building

Sunday, February 12th

7:00pm Port Washington Police Dept.

Monday, February 13th

7:00pm Wauwatosa Public Library

Sunday, March 5th

7:00pm Shorewood Village Hall

Saturday, March 11th

9:00am Johnson Creek Village Hall

1:00pm Hartford City Hall

Sunday, March 12th

7:00pm Grafton Village Hall

Saturday, March 25th

9:00am West Bend City Hall

1:00pm Waukesha State Bank

Sunday, March 26th

7:00pm Menomonee Falls Safety Building

PUBLIC DOCUMENT

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

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It is provided as a service to 5th Congressional District constituents.



PreSorted Standard
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OFFICE HOURS

Tuesday, January 17th

8:30am ... Kewaskum Village Hall
9:30am ... Addison Town Hall
10:15am ... Jackson Village Hall
11:15am ... Sussex Village Hall
12:45pm ... Lannon Village Hall
1:30pm ... Butler Village Hall

Thursday, January 19th

9:00am ... Bayside Village Hall
9:45am ... Fox Point Village Hall
10:30am ... River Hills Village Hall
11:15am ... Saukville Village Hall
1:30pm ... Belgium Village Hall
2:15pm ... Fredonia Village Hall
3:00pm ... Newburg Village Hall

Friday, January 20th

8:30am ... Helenville Fire Hall
9:15am ... Sullivan Village Hall
10:00am ... Palmyra Village Hall
11:00am ... Dousman Village Hall
11:45am ... Genesee Town Hall
12:30pm ... Wales Village Hall
2:00pm ... Nashotah Village Hall
2:45pm ... Merton Town Hall
3:30pm ... Merton Village Hall
4:15pm ... Pewaukee Village Hall

CONTACT INFORMATION

To write about issues or
request publications,
contact me at:

2449 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515-4905
TEL: (202) 225-5101

To get help with
federal agencies,
contact me at:

120 Bishops Way, #154
Brookfield, WI 53005-6294
TEL: (262) 784-1111

Outside Metro Calling Area:

(800) 242-1119

E-Mail: sensenbrenner@mail.house.gov
Website: www.house.gov/sensenbrenner