

The Consistency of Congressman Sensenbrenner

WISCONSIN

Freedom Weekly caught up with Congressman Jim Sensenbrenner last week, to discuss politics, current legislation and his tenure in Washington. When it comes to Congress, Sensenbrenner has seen it all. He has served Wisconsin in the House of Representatives for nearly 34 years. Prior to that, he served 6 years in the Wisconsin State Assembly and 4 years in the State Senate.

After getting such a great background from Senator Johnson last month on the federal debt and deficit, I asked Congressman Sensenbrenner to give us his thoughts on the country's finances: He said "More and more people are realizing the seriousness of our country's debt, and coming around to the fact that it can't be ignored any longer. I give Paul Ryan a lot of credit for that. With the country's credit rating being downgraded, we risk interest rates and costs going up in a vicious cycle. And inflation is like a sales tax hitting every part of the economy. A 43% jump in the deficit in President Obama's first three years just can't continue."

I asked the Congressman - Is baseline budgeting, duplication, and overfunding of agencies a problem at the federal level? He responded: "It certainly is. The Budget Act of 1974 made agencies spend their budgets or lose the funds, and that really started it all. I voted for legislation to cut funding for the legislative branch and returned 22% of my office budget to the Treasury."

We spoke about the STOCK Act currently being debated and he said: "I have been a big proponent of ethics reform and I intend to vote for the STOCK Act."

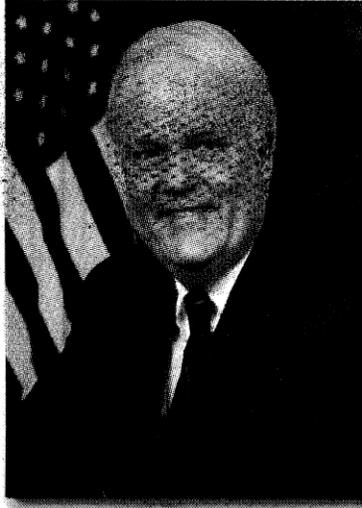
Sensenbrenner has been opposed to

earmarks consistently, and I asked how they get curtailed. His response: "I used to get chastised for opposing earmarks and not bringing pork back to Wisconsin. But I think the public is getting disgusted with individuals who lobby for them, and it's why we imposed a No Earmark Rule in the Republican House. When my constituents do call for them, I ask - is this is such a priority that we need to borrow from the Bank of China to pay for it and the interest that will be charged? We need to get an attitude to stop things like earmarks."

Climate Change is another hot button issue for Sensenbrenner and I asked him for the latest word: "I fought against Climate Change legislation and the ghastly Kyoto protocols. The economic impact of Kyoto would have permanently damaged the country. I think the recession helped all of us who opposed Cap and Tax legislation, because it took the wind out of their sails. But they will never give up, and the Durbin Conference last year demonstrated that. Cap and Tax would be a unilateral disarmament of manufacturing by the US and would simply act as a regressive hidden tax."

We talked about the November elections, and what an Obama victory would mean to the country's energy policies. He said: "Obama told everyone in the

last campaign that he would put the coal industry out of business. We are very tied to coal for Wisconsin's energy needs, and our costs are already being affected. Gas is up nearly 100% since he got in office, and electricity prices are jumping. Electricity costs affect everything and businesses and consumers will suffer."



I asked him about the partisanship in Washington and if he has ever seen it so confrontational in his 34 years: "The partisanship is intense in Washington, but that is only because the

American public is so polarized. There are less people in the middle than ever before. And part of the responsibility falls on McCain-Feingold, which brought with it a huge increase in negative advertising."

Then the topic of Illegal Immigration came up and Sensenbrenner had this to say: "Illegal Immigration needs to be addressed before it further damages this country. I've been a strong proponent for securing the borders, and fought vehemently against Amnesty. Amnesty only leads to more illegal immigration, as was proven by the program in the 90's. If you throw the book at employers who hire these workers, you can make some headway."

Finally, I asked him about current legislation he is putting forward and he had

two that he is pushing: "HR 1433 is The Private Property Rights Protection Act, and it prohibits the federal government from using eminent domain for economic development. It was originally passed in the House back in 2005, and has gained strong support from both parties. It's in response to the awful Kelo versus City of New London decision by the Supreme Court. That decision allowed government to "condemn" property for the sole purpose of redeveloping it, and was a tremendous overreach of power. The other bill is HR 3199, which requires the EPA to contract with the National Academy of Sciences to study the effects of E15 on vehicles and engines. It's apparent the EPA is rushing decisions on the expansion of biofuels, and I want to make sure that they get the science right before increasing its use. Support from groups like automakers, small businesses, and environmentalists is a good indication that the EPA needs to slow down and do the necessary analysis."

Through the years Sensenbrenner has been anything but a backbencher. He has championed legislation such as The Patriot Act and Real ID, and he was a main prosecutor in Bill Clinton's impeachment proceedings. His consistent opposition to illegal immigration, tax increases, climate change (cap and tax), and earmarks have all been popular with his constituents. He has never received less than 61% of the ballots cast in his Congressional races, and has averaged 77%. In this day and age where partisanship rules the day, Jim Sensenbrenner fits in well. Compromising on issues as important to the country as illegal immigration, climate change, and government spending are not in his nature and he will continue the fight. He champions the causes he believes in and those important to his constituents. And I'm sure he doesn't plan on hanging it up until he sees all of those issues through.