



CONGRESSMAN JIM SENSENBRENNER KEEPING IN TOUCH

ISSUE NUMBER 51 -- APRIL 2001

RFG: Avoiding a Repeat of Last Year's Price Spikes

As Spring approaches, Wisconsin citizens burdened with reformulated gas (RFG) requirements mandated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) face the bitter possibility of a repeat of last year's skyrocketing gas prices. Last year's attempts to obtain relief from the previous administration yielded incomplete results. Further modifications are needed to permit flexibility within the RFG program that will allow us to achieve the program's clean air goals without causing unnecessary gas price increases.

To keep the high cost of RFG from hitting Wisconsin consumers particularly hard again this Spring and Summer, Wisconsin legislators are working with the Bush Administration through EPA Administrator Christine Todd Whitman and U.S. Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham on measures to stem predicted gasoline price spikes in Wisconsin.

On March 2, 2001, I joined with other Wisconsin legislators in sending a letter to Administrator Whitman and Secretary Abraham expressing concern regarding the findings of the recently released Final Report of the Illinois House Special Committee on Gas Pricing. The letter noted the report's prediction that Wisconsin and Illinois consumers could pay up to \$3 per gallon for gasoline this summer. It also described last year's attempts to obtain relief from EPA's RFG mandates, which contributed to last Spring and Summer's price spikes.

Later, at a meeting attended by Congressmen Petri, Ryan, Kleczka, and myself on March 15, 2001, Administrator Whitman voiced EPA's willingness to compromise on an upward adjustment to the volatile organic compound (VOC) standard to .3 pounds per square inch Reid vapor pressure (PSIRVP). This will make the blending of RFG cheaper and easier. While there will

...continued on page 3



REMINDER...
**TOWN HALL MEETINGS
& OFFICE HOURS**
...SEE SCHEDULE: PAGES 3 & 4

GOOD NEWS FOR TAXPAYERS

Both the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) project a \$5.6 trillion surplus over the next 10 years. In that time, the federal government is expected to take in nearly \$28 trillion in taxes. Even after locking away all \$2.6 trillion in "off-budget" Social Security revenues along with all Medicare revenues, the remaining budget surplus is expected to equal nearly \$3.1 trillion over the same ten-year period.

My grave concern is that if surplus money is kept in Washington, we risk it being spent on costly new government programs. With President Bush's plan, we can complete the largest debt reduction in history, and still have \$1.6 trillion left to give back to hard-working Americans in the form of significant, common-sense tax relief. In fact, the income tax relief portion of the plan overwhelmingly passed the House of Representatives on March 8, 2001, and the tax relief will not stop there:

- The plan uses roughly a quarter of the surplus to provide responsible tax relief.
- Americans will see \$958 billion in income tax relief over 10 years.
- The income tax structure will be simplified and rates will be cut from 15%, 28%, 31%, 36%, and 39.6% to 10%, 15%, 25%, and 33% by 2006
- Low and middle income families who earn the least will receive the greatest percentage tax rate reduction, down from 15 percent to 10 percent. That's a 33 percent rate cut.
- It doubles the child tax credit to \$1,000 per child.
- It reduces the marriage penalty by reinstating the 10% deduction for two earner families.
- It eliminates the death tax.
- It expands charitable deductions to non-itemizers
- It makes the R&D tax credit permanent.
- The typical Wisconsin family of four will pay \$1,600 less in taxes. On average, that could pay for one year of community college, four months of child care, or gasoline for two cars for a year.
- All this is possible by refunding just 6.2 cents out of every dollar collected in federal taxes.

2001 ANNUAL QUESTIONNAIRE INSIDE

2001 ANNUAL QUESTIONNAIRE

The 107th Congress is involved with many issues vital to you, your family, and the nation. Please take a few minutes to complete this year's questionnaire. **All questions have a YES or NO answer unless otherwise indicated. Please mark your answer by placing an "X" in the space provided.** In some cases, a YES or NO answer may seem oversimplified, but I am often left with that same choice when voting on complex legislation on the House floor. Please let me know what matters to you. Fill out the response card on the next page, place a stamp on it, and return it to my Washington office. Thank you for your time.

Budget

1) Economists expect the U.S. to have a large federal budget surplus even after meeting our current spending priorities, including protecting Social Security and Medicare. What should be done with the remaining surplus? (check only ONE)

- a) Pay down the national debt.
- b) Give it back to the taxpayers in the form of broad-based tax relief.
- c) Both A and B
- d) Keep it in Washington to spend on government programs.

Taxes

2) Do you support legislation to provide relief from the marriage penalty tax, which forces working married couples who file jointly to pay higher taxes than individuals filing separately?

3) Would you be in favor of increasing the amount of money an individual can contribute annually to an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) from \$2,000 to \$5,000?

4) The death tax, a tax on inheritance, has been cited as a contributor to the sale of many family farms and small businesses. Do you feel the federal government should tax inheritance even if this money was already taxed as earned income or capital gains?

Energy

5) Do you feel Wisconsin has adequate supplies of energy to meet current and future needs without drastically raising rates?

Environment

6) Should Southeast Wisconsin drivers continue to be forced to comply with the reformulated gasoline (RFG) mandate?

7) President Clinton's administration pursued a number of actions to restrict access to and use of federal lands by the public for a variety of purposes including snowmobiling. Which of the following best represents your view on the use of federal lands?

- a) As much as possible, federal lands should be open to the public for a variety of purposes.
- b) The federal government should impose strong restrictions on the public uses of federal lands.

8) Who do you most trust to protect the environment in Wisconsin? (check only ONE)

- a) The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- b) The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
- c) Local governments and individual landowners

Education

9) Should the federal government help parents send their children to the schools of their choice?

Abortion

10) Do you support President Bush's recently reinstated policy that prohibits federal tax dollars from being used to fund organizations that promote abortions in foreign countries?

Campaign Finance

11) Should unions be required to seek approval from their individual members before spending their mandatory dues on political campaigns?

Agriculture

12) Should Congress approve "Trade Promotion Authority" that would allow President Bush the same authority that President Clinton had to speed up trade negotiations in order to benefit American farmers and businesses?

Health Care

13) On HMO reform, which of the following statements most closely reflects your views? (check only ONE)

- a) Congress should pass a bill that gives HMO patients the right to sue their health plan for an unlimited amount if they do not receive medical care even if this would dramatically raise premiums.
- b) Congress should pass a bill that gives HMO patients the right to a prompt and thorough independent review any time they are denied medical care by their health plan.

14) On the issue of providing prescription drug coverage for seniors, which of the following statements best reflects your views? (check only ONE)

- a) Permit health plans to fix prescription drug prices.
- b) Implement a one-size-fits-all government prescription drug program.
- c) Allow seniors to choose their health plan, and provide prescription drug benefits to all seniors and cost-sharing to low-income seniors.
- d) Limit which prescription drugs seniors may purchase in order to reduce costs.

Defense

15) Many defense policy experts are concerned that our military has been overextended with recent deployments of U.S. troops for peacekeeping and "nation-building." In what circumstances should U.S. troops be deployed overseas? (check only ONE)

- a) U.S. troops should be deployed overseas often, for a wide array of purposes.
- b) U.S. troops should be deployed overseas only to protect our most vital national interests.

Social Security

16) Do you support efforts to repeal the 1993 income tax increase on Social Security benefits, which will cut the maximum taxable percentage of Social Security benefits from 85% to 50%?

17) Do you support allowing people to invest a small portion of their Social Security payroll taxes in low-risk, government-approved private sector funds in order to potentially increase their retirement benefits?

Wisconsin

18) In what COUNTY do you live?

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE CARD

Respondent # 1

Respondent # 2

YES NO

YES NO

YES NO

YES NO

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. a)___ b)___ c)___ d)___ | 13. a)___ b)___ |
| 2. ___ ___ | 14. a)___ b)___ c)___ d)___ |
| 3. ___ ___ | 15. a)___ b)___ |
| 4. ___ ___ | 16. ___ ___ |
| 5. ___ ___ | 17. ___ ___ |
| 6. ___ ___ | 18. COUNTY |
| 7. a)___ b)___ | Dodge ___ |
| 8. a)___ b)___ c)___ | Fond du Lac ___ |
| 9. ___ ___ | Jefferson ___ |
| 10. ___ ___ | Ozaukee ___ |
| 11. ___ ___ | Sheboygan ___ |
| 12. ___ ___ | Washington ___ |
| | Waukesha ___ |

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. a)___ b)___ c)___ d)___ | 13. a)___ b)___ |
| 2. ___ ___ | 14. a)___ b)___ c)___ d)___ |
| 3. ___ ___ | 15. a)___ b)___ |
| 4. ___ ___ | 16. ___ ___ |
| 5. ___ ___ | 17. ___ ___ |
| 6. ___ ___ | 18. COUNTY |
| 7. a)___ b)___ | Dodge ___ |
| 8. a)___ b)___ c)___ | Fond du Lac ___ |
| 9. ___ ___ | Jefferson ___ |
| 10. ___ ___ | Ozaukee ___ |
| 11. ___ ___ | Sheboygan ___ |
| 12. ___ ___ | Washington ___ |
| | Waukesha ___ |

CUT ALONG THE DOTTED LINE, STAMP, AND MAIL

continued from page 1...

be an increase in VOCs, they will be offset by reductions in carbon monoxide (CO). When added to gasoline, ethanol increases the evaporation rate, causing more VOC emissions, but ethanol also reduces CO emissions.

We also received a commitment from Administrator Whitman to permit the co-blending of fuels during the transition between RFG winter and summer blends, in order to avoid a repeat of a significant problem that occurred last summer. Finally, Administrator Whitman has offered flexibility in case unforeseen problems arise in the transport of fuel to the Midwest.

I am happy we finally have an administration in Washington that is willing to listen and to help address Wisconsin's concerns with RFG. Several steps have been taken in the ongoing process of alleviating the burden of high gas prices on Wisconsin consumers. I am hopeful that the agreements we've reached will forestall drastic gasoline price spikes this Spring without compromising the environment. ■

HOUSE PASSES JUDICIARY BILLS Bankruptcy Reform Promotes Financial Responsibility

So far in the 107th Congress, the House Judiciary Committee, which I chair, has passed 6 bills for consideration on the House floor. In concrete terms, that means that 30 percent of bills considered by the 107th Congress to date came from the Judiciary Committee.

Among those bills was HR 333, the Bankruptcy Abuse and Prevention Act. Over the past 20 years, filings for bankruptcy have skyrocketed. In 1998 alone, there were 1.4 million filings. With the number of filings going up, so is the amount of debt passed on to consumers in the form of higher costs for goods and services, higher interest rates, and difficulty obtaining credit. It is estimated that the average American family pays approximately \$400 per year due to the costs associated with bankruptcy.

HR 333 is designed to restore personal financial responsibility. If debtors have the ability to repay their debts, they will be required to do so. An agreement between the House and Senate needs to be reached before a final bill can be sent to the President. If signed into law, bankruptcy reform will strengthen the economy and take the burden off responsible consumers.

TOWN HALL MEETINGS

Mon., April 16
7:00 p.m. Richfield Town Hall

Tues., April 17
7:00 p.m. Port Washington Police Dept.

Wed., April 18
7:00 p.m. Pewaukee City Hall

Thurs., April 19
7:00 p.m. Sheboygan Falls City Hall

Sat., April 21
9:00 a.m. Beaver Dam City Hall
1:00 p.m. Oconomowoc City Hall

Sun., April 22
12:00 noon Juneau Community Center

Sat., April 28
9:00 a.m. Sheboygan Mead Library
1:00 p.m. Cedarburg City Hall

Sun., April 29
12:00 noon West Bend City Hall

Sat., May 19
9:00 a.m. Fort Atkinson City Hall
1:00 p.m. Brookfield City Hall

Sun., May 20
1:00 p.m. Lake Mills City Hall

Sun., June 3
7:00 p.m. Hartland Village Hall

Sun., June 10
7:00 p.m. Mequon Police Dept.

Sun., June 17
7:00 p.m. Germantown Village Hall

Sun., June 24
7:00 p.m. Watertown City Hall

PLEASE PRINT BELOW

Name _____

Street _____

City/State/Zip _____

Please
place
34 cent
stamp here

If you do not wish to be added to my
regular mailing list, check this box

REP. F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, JR.
2332 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-4909

CUT ALONG THE DOTTED LINE, STAMP, AND MAIL

OFFICE HOURS...

Spring 2001

Mon., April 16

8:30 a.m. Howard's Grove Village Hall
9:15 a.m. Kohler Village Hall
10:00 a.m. Oostburg State Bank
10:45 a.m. Adell Senior Center
11:30 a.m. Random Lake Village Hall
1:00 p.m. Cedar Grove Library
1:45 p.m. Belgium Village Hall
2:30 p.m. Fredonia Village Hall
3:15 p.m. Saukville Village Hall

Tues., April 17

8:30 a.m. Johnson Creek Village Hall
9:15 a.m. Helenville Firehall

10:00 a.m. Sullivan Village Hall
11:00 a.m. Wales Village Hall
12:30 p.m. Genesee Town Hall
1:15 p.m. North Prairie Village Hall
2:00 p.m. Eagle Village Hall
2:45 p.m. Palmyra Village Hall
3:45 p.m. Dousman Village Hall

Wed., April 18

8:30 a.m. Ixonia Town Hall
9:15 a.m. Lebanon Town Hall
10:00 a.m. Neosho Village Hall
10:45 a.m. Iron Ridge Village Hall
11:30 a.m. Hustisford Village Hall

1:00 p.m. Clyman Village Hall
1:45 p.m. Lowell Village Hall
2:30 p.m. Reeseville Village Hall
3:15 p.m. Waterloo City Hall

Thurs., April 19

8:00 a.m. Burnett Town Hall
8:45 a.m. Waupun City Hall
9:30 a.m. Brownsville Village Hall
10:15 a.m. Kekoskee Village Hall
11:00 a.m. Lomira Village Hall
12:30 p.m. Theresa Village Hall
1:15 p.m. Kewaunee Village Hall
2:15 p.m. Addison Town Hall

3:00 p.m. Ashippun Town Hall
3:45 p.m. Rubicon Town Hall

Fri., April 20

8:00 a.m. Nashotah Village Hall
8:45 a.m. Merton Village Hall
9:30 a.m. Pewaukee Village Hall
10:15 a.m. Sussex Village Hall
11:00 a.m. Butler Village Hall
12:30 p.m. Lannon Village Hall
1:30 p.m. Slinger Village Hall
2:15 p.m. Jackson Village Hall
3:15 p.m. Newburg Village Hall

Town Hall Meetings and Office Hours provide me the chance to hear your views on the issues before Congress or to help you with problems you may be experiencing in dealing with a federal agency. I look forward to seeing you at the next meeting nearest your home. Please contact my district office if you require special accommodations to attend.

Congressman
JIM
SENSENBRENNER

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4909

Official Business

M.C.
Presorted Standard
ECRWSS

2332 Rayburn Building 120 Bishops Way, #154
Washington, DC 20515 Brookfield, WI 53005
(202) 225-5101 (262) 784-1111

Outside Metro Calling Area: 1-800-242-1119
E-Mail: sensen09@mail.house.gov
<http://www.house.gov/sensenbrenner/>

Postal Patron -- Local
9th Congressional District
Wisconsin

Printed on Partially Recycled Paper
This mailing was prepared, published, and mailed at taxpayer expense.