



# CONGRESSMAN JIM SENSENBRENNER NEWS FROM CONGRESS

NUMBER 159 -- JANUARY 2001

## CHAIRING THE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

In the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress, I will have the honor of serving as Chairman of the House Committee on the Judiciary. I bring to the job nearly 22 years of service on the Judiciary Committee, which has jurisdiction over issues ranging from constitutional questions to immigration, and federal agencies such as the Department of Justice to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

Key issues to be addressed include antitrust laws, bankruptcy reform, civil and constitutional rights, and jurisdiction over federal criminal laws. Antitrust law will come into play with hot button issues such as the Microsoft case, the America Online/Time Warner merger, and the consolidation of the agriculture industry. Bankruptcy reform will ensure that declaring bankruptcy is a last resort rather than a solution for fiscal irresponsibility. Civil and constitutional rights will be addressed in issues including voting rights and the electoral college. Finally, federal criminal laws will be actively overseen, with the enforcement of existing federal gun laws and the effective incorporation of DNA analysis in federal criminal trials.

By keeping our legislative activity focused, the Judiciary Committee will be able to dedicate its resources in the most productive way. The Chair of the Judiciary Committee must also work to ensure that the billions of dollars appropriated to the Department of Justice are being properly spent and administered, and that the laws passed by Congress are being implemented according to the will of Congress.

Finally, the transition from the chairmanship of the Science Committee to the Judiciary Committee reemphasizes the Congressional majority's commitment to the reforms enacted at the beginning of the 104<sup>th</sup> Congress in 1994. In the Contract with America, we promised to change the way business was done in Washington by enacting common-sense reforms, including term limits for committee chairmen, to ensure that power does not become concentrated in the hands of only a few and that new and innovative ideas may take root in Congress. This month, I take over the Judiciary Committee from term-limited Chairman Henry Hyde of Illinois. I remain committed to these reforms, and will work to reflect the will of the people I represent. ■

## AVOIDING FUTURE ELECTORAL FIASCOS

Following the fiasco of the presidential election in Florida, we've heard a lot about election reform. Before Congress marches down this road, it's important to determine whether the consequences of many of the proposed changes will solve the problem or complicate it.

The close presidential vote in Florida highlighted flaws in the state's election laws and procedures which do not exist in Wisconsin and most other states. Wisconsin has been phasing out punch card ballots since faulty punches probably changed the outcome of a congressional special election in May, 1993. This phaseout will be complete by the end of this year. Wisconsin municipalities have invested their property tax revenues to buy the more accurate optical scanner voting machines. Further, Florida law allows losing candidates two opportunities to overturn an election, a "protest," or recount, phase and then a "contest" phase in court. Wisconsin combines both phases into one, thus expediting the process of determining who received the most votes. Had Florida spent the money necessary to update its voting systems and patterned its recount laws after ours, we would never have witnessed judges holding punch card ballots up to the light and this whole matter would have been resolved much more quickly.

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**REMINDER...**

**OFFICE HOURS &  
TOWN HALL MEETINGS**

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# UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL WARMING TALKS COLLAPSE

## *Good News for Consumers*

The recent collapse of the United Nations (UN) climate change talks at The Hague, Netherlands promises to be good news for U.S. consumers.

The purpose of these talks was to reach agreement on the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol, a UN global warming treaty that Clinton Administration negotiators had agreed to at Kyoto, Japan in December 1997—a treaty that is unfair to the U.S. and that would result in higher energy costs for all Americans.

The Kyoto Protocol stipulates that the U.S. cut its greenhouse gas emissions by 7% below its 1990 levels by the years 2008-2012—a reduction of more than 30% from what they otherwise would be. While I share most Americans' desire to protect our global environment, this UN treaty allows the vast majority of nations to continue emitting unrestricted amounts of greenhouse gases while imposing strict, expensive limits on the U.S. and other developed countries.

Under Kyoto's terms, over 130 developing nations—including some of the world's biggest polluters, such as Mexico, China, Brazil, and India—would be permitted to pollute the atmosphere unchecked while the U.S. and other developed countries would have to tighten their belts and sacrifice jobs that would surely flow to nations exempt from the treaty. These developing countries are expected to be among the biggest emitters during the next century, and an additional 2.4 million U.S. manufacturing jobs could be expected to move to those countries where companies could take advantage of cheaper energy.

Every U.S. consumer would pay the price for implementing the Kyoto treaty. Energy prices would rise dramatically because industries and consumers would be forced to convert from coal, oil, and other fossil fuels to more expensive alternatives. In fact, the Clinton Administration's own Energy Information Administration has found the Kyoto Protocol would have devastating impacts on the U.S. economy, including increased annual energy costs for the average household of up to \$1,740; electricity price increases of up to 86%; gasoline price increases of up to 66¢/gallon; fuel oil price increases of up to 76%; and natural gas price increases of up to 147%.

I was chosen by Speaker of the House Hastert to lead the Congressional delegation to observe The Hague cli-

mate talks, and can report first-hand that the talks foundered primarily because of lack of agreement between the U.S. and the European Union—headed by France—on the issues of emissions trading and so-called “carbon sinks.”

Under the terms of the Kyoto Protocol, developed countries are allowed to meet their emissions targets through trading. For example, East Germany's economic collapse and the closure of its super-polluting factories leave the European Union with tradable surplus emissions rights. These credits can be *transferred* to other European countries, like Portugal and Greece, who can then dramatically increase their greenhouse gas emissions by as much as 27%. On the other hand, the United States will have to *buy* credits, most likely from Russia—an arrangement that would amount to little more than disguised foreign aid. In addition, the European Union insisted that the U.S. agree to a 50% cap on such trades, which would greatly increase our cost of meeting the Kyoto targets.

The European Union also worked to severely restrict the use of carbon sinks—which include forests and cropland, that could absorb greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, at a moderate cost—even though a ton of carbon absorbed by a sink is equivalent to a ton a carbon of emission reductions. As in the case of an emissions trading cap, such a restriction would also increase our cost of meeting the Kyoto targets.

In addition, the Delegation was treated to French President Chirac's calling the Kyoto Protocol “a genuine instrument of global governance.” It seems that at some point an environmental treaty seeking to address an important issue was transformed into a Trojan Horse for a global governance scheme that promises to shackle the world economy.

While there is no scientific disagreement that more carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are in our atmosphere than before the industrial revolution, scientists disagree about the extent these man-made gases contribute to global warming, the amount of warming, or even if the planet is warming at all. Computer models predicting warming over the next centuries may prove correct or no more reliable than tomorrow's weather forecast, and in any event, even the models show that implementing the

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In light of what we have learned from the election of 2000, several principles are obvious:

First, state legislatures should keep control of election procedures. Each state has different laws, fills different offices, and has different referendum questions on the ballot each election. To federalize ballots for national offices would mean that voters in each state would get two ballots, one for President, Senator, and Representative and the other for state and county offices and referenda. That would greatly confuse voters and election officials and cause more mistakes to occur.

Second, the calls for a massive grant program of federal tax dollars to “improve” voting machines in areas like south Florida are patently unfair to taxpayers in areas which have replaced punch cards and antiquated voting methods at the expense of higher property taxes on themselves. Why should Wisconsin taxpayers pay for their own modern voting machines through property taxes, as well as for these same machines in places like South Florida where local officials have refused to buy them? I fear that the talk of federal aid will cause officials in these areas to delay replacing the old ballots with modern technology in the hopes Uncle Sam will cough up the money.

Third, the electoral college system works well. Had the

electoral college been abolished by constitutional amendment before last year’s election, the recount and court challenge fiasco in Florida would have gone nationwide. The electoral college confined this spectacle to only one state, thus saving Wisconsin and the other 48 states the expense and embarrassment.

Abolishing the electoral college would drastically change the way presidential campaigns are conducted. Candidates would concentrate in major media markets and pander to groups promising to deliver blocks of votes. One can draw circles around the major media markets in the country and that’s where the candidates would go, leaving Wisconsin decidedly out of the picture. Because our state is evenly divided politically, we saw Governor Bush twelve times and Vice President Gore nine times last year, plus visits from the vice presidential candidates, spouses, and family members. That would not have happened had the electoral college disappeared.

Finally, there is no substitute for each voter’s responsibility to make sure their ballot is properly executed before putting it into the ballot box. Studies done after the election showed that grade school children were able to properly punch ballots. If the kids can do it right, must Big Brother government step in when older (and presumably more mature) people can’t? ■

## **OFFICE HOURS**

### **Monday, Jan. 22**

**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

### **Tuesday, Jan. 23**

**8:30 a.m.** Johnson Creek Village Hall  
**9:15 a.m.** Helenville Firehall  
**10:15 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

### **Wednesday, Jan. 24**

**8:30 a.m.** Howards 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

### **Thursday, Jan. 25**

**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

### **Friday, Jan. 26**

**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.** Butler Village Hall  
**11:00 a.m.** Sussex 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

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Kyoto Protocol would have a miniscule effect on such warming.

The Kyoto Protocol is seriously flawed—so flawed, in fact, that it cannot be salvaged. It is based on immature science, costs too much, leaves too many procedural questions unanswered, is grossly unfair because developing countries are not required to participate, and will do nothing to solve the speculative problem it is intended to solve. It is time to revisit the global warming issue, and I am confident that the Bush-Cheney Administration will do so. ■

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

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To get help with  
federal agencies,  
contact me at:

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

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

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## TOWN HALL MEETINGS

**Mon., Jan. 22**

7 p.m. Horicon City Hall

**Tues., Jan. 23**

7 p.m. Cedarburg City Hall

**Wed., Jan. 24**

7 p.m. Brookfield City Hall

**Thurs., Jan. 25**

7 p.m. Sheboygan Mead  
Library

**Sat., Jan. 27**

9 a.m. Oconomowoc City Hall  
1 p.m. Beaver Dam City Hall

**Sun., Jan. 28**

12 noon West Bend City Hall

**Mon., Jan. 29**

7 p.m. Jefferson City Hall

**Sun., Feb. 4**

5 p.m. Pewaukee City Hall

**Sat. March 3**

9 a.m. Hartland Village Hall  
1 p.m. Lake Mills City Hall

**Sun., March 4**

1 p.m. Grafton Village Hall

**Sat., March 10**

9 a.m. Germantown Village  
Hall

1 p.m. Mayville Senior Center

**Sun., March 11**

1 p.m. Menomonee Falls  
Village Hall

**Mon., March 12**

7 p.m. Fort Atkinson City  
Hall

**Sat., March 24**

9 a.m. Delafield City Hall  
1 p.m. Watertown City Hall

**Sun., March 25**

12 noon Elm Grove 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**



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**NEWS FROM  
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