

Congressman **Jim Sensenbrenner**

News From Congress

Number 176 – October 2007



Leading The Way On Immigration Reform

For decades, the topic of how to control illegal immigration has been too hot to handle. Attempts to control our borders and to dry up the market for illegal immigrant workers have been strongly opposed by a lobby which has the ear of the media. As a result, the number of illegal immigrants in the US has ballooned to between 14 and 20 million with an estimated net increase of about 500,000 each year.

Not only do the large numbers of illegal immigrants reduce wages for Americans and legal permanent residents, but our loose borders pose significant law enforcement and national security problems. Large amounts of illegal drugs are smuggled across the border and are sold by gangs on our streets. Moreover, significant numbers of “persons of interest” (those on anti-terrorist watch lists and those with outstanding criminal warrants), have been picked up by the Border Patrol trying to enter our country illegally.

That is why I decided to put illegal immigration control on the national agenda in 2005 when I was the Chair of the House Judiciary Committee. I knew a hot debate and intense criticism would result, but action was necessary. The people of the 5th District seem to agree, as my recent survey showed you feel illegal immigration is the greatest threat to the US today.

In crafting legislation, I was guided by the report of a Select Commission appointed by President Carter in 1979, and headed by Father Theodore Hesburgh, then the President of Notre Dame University. The report concluded:

“(We do) not believe that the US should begin the process of legalization until new enforcement measures have been instituted to make it clear that the US is determined to curtail new flows of undocumented/illegal aliens. Without more effective enforcement than the US has had in the past, legalization could serve as a stimulus to further illegal entry. The Select Commission is opposed to any program that could precipitate such movement.”

Events of the past 28 years have proven the Hesburgh Commission right. That is why I introduced a bill to tighten the border and crack down on those employers who hire illegal immigrants. This bill passed the House of Representatives in December 2005 by a vote of 239-182. The Senate failed to act on it, but instead passed its own bill, which was weak on enforcement and gave amnesty to illegal immigrants. “Comprehensive” immigration reform became a buzzword for amnesty, and the American public exposed it as such. Another try at “comprehensive reform” failed this year in the Senate.

Notwithstanding the Senate’s failure to pass my

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bill, putting this issue on the national agenda has forced both Congress and the Administration to accept many of its features. Changes in the past two years have included:

- Passage of a bill authorizing 758 miles of fence along the southern border, and funding the first 350 miles of fence, 300 miles of vehicle barriers, and 105 cameras and radio towers;
- Funding 2,220 additional Border Patrol Officers and 9,000 additional detention beds;
- Changing the old policy of “catch and release” of illegal immigrants to “detain and deport” (this alone has slowed the flow of illegal immigrants);
- Stepped up raids on employers hiring illegal immigrants;
- Requiring employers to fire employees who use false Social Security Numbers to obtain jobs and forcing them to use an electronic system to verify the accuracy of SSNs;
- Aggressively recruiting and training state and local police to help enforce immigration laws in their communities.

None of these improvements would have happened without my introducing, and the House passing, the 2005 bill. We still do need better legislation which does not include an amnesty to completely solve this problem. I am disappointed that some in the Democratic Leadership have said that further effective legislation is off the table until 2013 at the earliest. Since that delay is unacceptable, you can rest assured that I will continue my efforts in Congress to work for immigration reform.

Passport Update - Temporary Reprieve Is Over!

Changes to federal law implemented in January 2007 require US citizens traveling by air outside of the United States to obtain a US passport. Due to the unprecedented volume of passport applications, the US Department of State and Homeland Security announced a temporary reprieve to this policy until September 30, 2007. This allowed travelers who had applied but not yet received a passport, to travel with proof that a passport application was pending with the US Department of State.

However, it is important to note now that this temporary reprieve **expired September 30, 2007**. Beginning October 1, 2007, all US citizens traveling by air outside of the United States will be required to present a valid passport to enter and depart the United States.

I urge international travelers to apply for a passport as soon as they are aware of their travel plans. For assistance with the US Passport Agency, please contact my District Office in Brookfield.

Season Of Fiscal Responsibility

The arrival of fall signifies the end of summer, and a period of transition, as families switch gears and focus on the beginning of the school year. Students once again have to get accustomed to waking up early, while parents begin to juggle many new expenses: school supplies, new shoes, field trips, dance lessons and athletic team fees. So it is also, as families across the country are performing a fiscal balancing act, your United States Congress is focused on money. Now that Congress has returned to Washington, my colleagues and I are working on the annual appropriations process.

As this process unfolds, you can be sure I will continue to be a responsible steward of taxpayer money. I take this responsibility very seriously. When Democrats gained the majority in Congress, they claimed they would take the country in a “New Direction” and respond to Americans’ demands for fiscal prudence. In reality, all they have offered this year is their same old tax and spend proposals. As a result of these spending ideas, I was only able to support two of the twelve appropriations bills passed by the House of Representatives this spring and summer.

The decision to oppose these spending packages was easy. Year after year, I vote against most appropriations bills because they are chock full of pork. Democrats promised more disclosure and transparency in the process, and I was hopeful this would be the case. However, we still find prime examples of unbelievable frivolity in requests like \$50,000 for a National Mule and Packers Museum,

and \$129,000 for a “perfect Christmas tree” project! Given the overall size of the federal budget, arguments may be made that these projects are too little to make an impact, but I believe this way of thinking is dangerous, and feeds into the out-of-control spending adopted by Congress lately.

It frustrates me that there are so few of us in the House who are willing to stand up for fiscal responsibility. As citizens of the 5th Congressional District, you will never have to worry about my supporting these pork barrel projects. In fact, outside organizations such as the Club for Growth and the Council for Citizens Against Government Waste (CCAGW) track votes on these spending bills. The Club for Growth recently released its 2007 RePORK Card, which reviewed 50 votes on amendments to eliminate earmarks from spending bills. I am proud to say I was one of only **16** Members to vote in favor of all 50 amendments. Meanwhile, earlier this year, the CCAGW released its 2006 Congressional Ratings, and I had the honor of being named a ‘Taxpayer Hero.’

Clearly, earmarks and pet projects hurt the rest of the nation, because they misdirect funds from the general revenue. While I can bring my Wisconsin common sense and restraint to the appropriations table, try as I might, I cannot stop some of my colleagues from pigging out at the trough. By continuing to live up to my reputation as a fiscal conservative, I will lead by example, and to that end, I count on 5th District residents to hold me accountable.



Congressman Sensenbrenner is pictured with Mr. Fred Sweet and his Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medals for his service in the US Navy during WWII. After initially being denied by the Navy, Mr. Sweet requested the Congressman’s assistance, who helped procure these medals for him after corresponding with the Navy on Mr. Sweet’s behalf. Surrounding them are family and friends of Mr. Sweet.

You're Invited...

I host scores of Town Hall Meetings to provide you the chance 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. This newsletter includes my schedule of meetings for the next several weeks, and 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.

Town Hall Meetings

Saturday, October 6th

9:00am Johnson Creek Village Hall

1:00pm Waukesha Public Library

Sunday, October 7th

12:00pm Menomonee Falls Village Hall

Saturday, October 13th

9:00am Slinger Village Hall

1:00pm Hartland Village Hall

Sunday, October 14th

7:00pm Richfield Town Hall

Saturday, October 20th

9:00am Delafield City Hall

1:00pm Thiensville Village Hall

Sunday, October 21st

1:00pm Brookfield Public Safety Building

Saturday, October 27th

1:00pm New Berlin City Hall

Sunday, October 28th

1:00pm Shorewood Village Hall

Saturday, November 3rd

9:00am Grafton Village Hall

1:00pm Wauwatosa Public Library

Sunday, November 4th

7:00pm Brown Deer Village Hall

CONTACT INFORMATION

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