

# CONGRESSWOMAN

# SHEILA JACKSON LEE



*Dear Friend:*

*It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to our 109<sup>th</sup> Congressional Summer Newsletter. This newsletter highlights current issues, legislation and events that are of interest to constituents of the 18<sup>th</sup> Congressional District of Texas. This letter will inform you of the work we have undertaken recently in order to support the needs and hopes of the constituents of the 18<sup>th</sup> District. I want you to know that as your Congressional Office we have worked to bring FEMA funds for Hurricane Katrina and Rita evacuees and worked to provide affordable, decent low-income housing and home repairs in the district. As the Chairwoman of the Congressional Children's Caucus I have worked to ensure the well being of children here in America and around the world. As a member of the Homeland Security Committee I have worked to ensure the safety and security of our nation. In my role as the Ranking Member on the Subcommittee on Immigration and Claims, I have worked tirelessly to improve and reform our immigration policy. We will continue all of this work on behalf of you, my constituents, because it is my sworn duty and responsibility as a Member of Congress.*

*It has been my honor to represent the residents of the 18<sup>th</sup> District. Please know that you are always my highest priority, and that I am here for you should you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions.*

*Sincerely,*

*Sheila Jackson Lee*  
Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress

## ***Responding and Recovery***

Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee has worked very hard to ensure that the victims of last year's Hurricanes Katrina and Rita get the aid they need. As a member of the Katrina Task Force, she is dedicated to the principles of "rebuilding and reviving America's Gulf Coast after Katrina" and "insuring all Americans are protected and prepared when disaster strikes." Last November, an amendment was proposed to the Private Property Rights Protection Act of 2005 by Congresswoman Jackson Lee in order to protect property owned by the survivors of Hurricane Katrina from being taken by the Federal government for economic development or private use. She also cosponsored the Hurricane Katrina Recovery, Reclamation, Restoration, Reconstruction and Reunion Act of 2005, introduced earlier this year. If passed, it would provide individuals who suffered economic loss from Hurricane Katrina with eligibility for compensation.

On June 8 of this year Congress passed a \$94.5 billion bill to pay for both the war in Iraq and the hurricane-ravaged Gulf Coast. Some of the funds included in that legislation are \$5.2 billion for Community Development Block Grants to help homeowners rebuild, \$3.7 billion for levee improvements, \$400 million for alternative housing for Katrina survivors, and \$542 million in assistance for small businesses. The 18<sup>th</sup> Congressional District is currently home to approximately 150,000 Hurricane Katrina evacuees. The 18<sup>th</sup> Congressional District has been very generous in its response to the new residents in Houston, Texas. She is working with city leaders to make sure Houston is properly reimbursed for its efforts in a timely manner.



*Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee and FEMA Director R. David Paulison listen to Houston residents' experiences during Hurricane Katrina.*

## ***Voting Rights Act Authorized for a New Generation***

Earlier this month President George W. Bush signed into law an extension of the Voting Rights Act that overwhelmingly passed Congress after civil rights leaders and members of the Congressional Black Caucus mobilized supporters and kept the issue before the public. With the stroke of a pen President Bush gave the 1965 voting rights act a new 25 year lease on life.

At this point in history, many feel passage of the Voting Rights Act extension was one of the civil rights community's finest hours.

The legislation bears the names of three women who were active in the civil rights movement: Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks and Coretta Scott King. The President said he was signing the bill "in honor of their memory and their contribution to the cause of freedom."

## *Preserving Access to Medicare Part D*

The initial enrollment period for Medicare Part D prescription drug benefits was January 1<sup>st</sup> through May 15<sup>th</sup>. Prior to the enrollment deadline of May 15<sup>th</sup>, about 6 million seniors and persons with disabilities still had not enrolled in the program's new drug benefit, and many have yet to do so. Individuals who have failed to meet the established deadline are subject to a late enrollment penalty of 1% of the base beneficiary premium per month to be added to their monthly premiums.

The next enrollment period is not until November 15<sup>th</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup> of this year, which means that those who have missed the May 15<sup>th</sup> deadline will have to pay a 7% penalty, 1% for each month late. The Congresswoman was aware of this stipulation and hosted an enrollment drive in Houston to help Houstonians select drug plans and enroll.

Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee has worked hard to secure Part D prescription drug benefits for Houstonians, Texans, and all Americans. Since the passing of this important legislation, she has worked diligently to extend



*Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee meets with Seniors regarding Medicare Part D.*

the May 15<sup>th</sup> deadline for enrolling and to ensure that late enrollees will not be penalized. Studies have shown that some 45% of eligible Part D beneficiaries were not aware of the May 15<sup>th</sup> enrollment deadline, and that 53% percent of those eligible were not aware that they would be assessed a penalty for late enrollment. She believes that such penalties are unfair, unwarranted, and that they will ultimately hurt those in need of prescription drugs, as well as the American healthcare system overall.

## *Good Governance and Ethical Conduct*

During the past few months, there have been many instances of alleged corruption and unethical behavior among our nation's public officials. The Federal Enforcement Agencies and Members of Congress have been taking steps to deal with these individuals who break the law and abuse their powers as public servants. Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee advocates for and upholds the highest ethical standards as a Member of Congress, and like her 18<sup>th</sup> district predecessors, she has worked to ensure that all Members follow suit.

The House of Representatives offered a bill to make reforms in lobbying and ethics, in response to the unethical actions of public officials. She is a strong advocate for the presumption of innocence in the American justice system, and feels that no individual should be implicated on tenuous grounds, including public officials who are under suspicion of having conflicts of interest. However, she believes that crimes must be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

As part of her continuing effort to ensure the integrity and purpose of the US Congress, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee introduced the Congressional Lawmaking

Authority Protection Act (CLAP Act) this past May. The CLAP Act seeks to preserve the constitutional separation of the authorities delegated to the executive and legislative branches of government by preventing the President from issuing bill signing statements that are inconsistent with congressional intent.

She was deeply troubled with the increasing reliance on bill signing statements that reinterpreted laws passed by Congress. Presidential signing statements seek to alter Congress' primacy in the legislative process by giving the President's intention in signing the bill equal or greater standing to Congress' intention in enacting the bill, thus breaching the constitutional separation of powers. The CLAP Act will prevent the President from encroaching upon the Congressional prerogative to make laws, as well as ensure that Presidential signing statements are void of any legal significance. This will force the President to veto legislation, rather than reinterpret it for unintended or modified purposes, allowing Congress to consider the President's objections and override vetoes.

## *National Security and the Port of Houston*

During the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress, the House of Representatives asserted leadership in protecting our U.S. seaports, understanding that these essential hubs of commerce are vulnerable to terrorist attacks. Terrorists could cause mass casualties and serious damage to the economy if a weapon of mass destruction (WMD) is detonated in a container or if a large passenger vessel is attacked. The nation's economic prosperity rests on the ability of containerized and bulk cargo arriving unimpeded at U.S. ports to support the delivery system that underpins the manufacturing and retail sectors.

Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee co-sponsored the Secure Containers from Overseas And Seaports from Terrorism Act which would require the Department of Homeland Security to develop sealing standards for containers and a verification process to ensure containers have not been tampered with. In addition, the Secure

COAST Act authorizes \$297 million dollars for the 2006 budget for the Customs and Border Protection to install port monitors at seaports and the Department of Homeland Security to secure the ports more effectively.

Members of the Homeland Security Committee also championed the Security and Accountability for Every (SAFE) Port Act. This bill directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop and implement a strategic plan to enhance the security of the maritime transportation system and establishes a port security grant program to allocate federal assistance to U.S. ports on the basis of risk and need. The legislation has the overall plan of strengthening and improving the overall security of the international supply chain and U.S. border security. The SAFE Port Act was passed by the House in May virtually unanimously (421-2).

## Foreign Affairs

Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee takes a personal interest in pursuing and protecting the human rights and civil rights of people in the 18<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, and around the world, and thus is active in many international relations issues.

She introduced a house resolution to congratulate Prime Minister Portia Simpson-Miller for becoming the first democratically-elected female Prime Minister of Jamaica and first female Jamaican head of state. She also traveled to Liberia with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and First Lady Laura Bush for the inauguration of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

In April, she traveled to Doha, Qatar, for the 6th Annual Forum for Democracy, Development and Free Trade, a meeting of 560 leaders from 78 countries around the world. "The success of the Doha Forum is evidence that we must recognize that the forces of globalization are at work, and that international dialogue is crucial to providing real solutions to the complex problems facing our world today," she said. "Only by working in partnership can we achieve political reform peacefully and minimize the potential for international conflict."

She has been very involved in human rights issues in Africa, especially Sudan. One year after a life-changing journey to Sudan in April 2005, she and four other representatives visited the Sudanese embassy in person to present legislative demands and advocate a policy of peace and compromise.

During her trip to the Middle East last May, Congresswoman

Sheila Jackson Lee visited troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. In Afghanistan, she noted that, while it was on a road to recovery, decades of war had rendered its economy in total disrepair and its environment in a state of crisis.

During her trip to Iraq, she hoped "to observe the progress Iraq is making in becoming a strong independent, and sovereign nation that can stand on its own two feet and protects its people." She maintains her opposition to the unjustified war in Iraq and believes that the best way to support our troops is to support them while they are away, and begin to build a long-term strategic plan to allow them to return home. She feels strongly that we should not leave the country in disarray, and instead urges the President to develop a scheduled plan to complete the mission in Iraq and allow our service men and women to return home.

While abroad, she also paid a visit to Pakistan, as the co-chair of the Congressional Pakistan Caucus in the U.S. House Representatives. She met with Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf, who underlined the importance of expanding bilateral trade and economic ties and expressed satisfaction with the growing cooperation between Pakistan and the U.S.

Most recently in June, she participated in a roundtable discussion with eight chief justices from the African nations of Namibia, Rwanda, Ethiopia, South Africa, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, and Malawi, led by the Congressional Human Rights Caucus.



*The Congresswoman presents legislative initiatives to the Sudan Embassy.*



*The Congresswoman meets with Soldier in Iraq to discuss safety concerns.*

## Judiciary Issues

As a senior Member of the Committee on Judiciary, and as the Ranking Member of the subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security and Claims, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee has played an integral role in the immigration debate on Capitol Hill, as well as other constitutional rights concerns.

First and foremost, she introduced the Save America Comprehensive Immigration Act, HR 2092, which is a bill that balances moral protection and legal access to immigration with firm and efficient enforcement.

She has also been a vocal advocate for preventative measures against hate crimes, safeguards against commercial immigrant smuggling, efforts to preserve child safety, non-violent offenders protections, workplace rights, and religious expression.

In addition, she introduced HR 257, which would amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to reunify families, permit earned access to permanent resident status, provide protection against unfair immigration-related employment practices, reform the diversity visa program, and for other purposes.

She also introduced legislation that is meant to help enhance federal enforcement of hate crimes, such as HR 259, The Hate Crimes Prevention of 2005. Additionally, she introduced HR 5610, The Foreign Anti-Sex Offender

Protection Act of 2006, which is intended to prevent sex offenders from using immigration laws to bring innocent, unsuspecting victims into the United States.

The Congresswoman feels passionately about ensuring that those who have been displaced by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita are able to vote in elections, and thus have access to their constitutionally protected civil rights. Ahead of the local elections in New Orleans in April, she took a leadership role in ensuring voting access through satellite voting opportunities. In March, she wrote a letter to the Attorney General expressing her concerns and visions for ensuring that those relocated could express their right to vote even though they were not physically present in their states and districts.

The Congresswoman has contributed her expertise to the efforts of the Congressional Black Caucus by helping to craft the Statement of Principles regarding Immigration Reform. She was able to educate and guide her peers to adopt an organizational position on immigration reform that describes the responsibility of the federal government to enforce the law, protect the border, pursue earned access to citizenship, allow economic opportunity and fair wages for legal workers, and preserve diversity and equal treatment of all candidates for admission.

## Local Assistance

I know that my constituents have needs that go beyond the help of my congressional office. Therefore, the following is a list of frequently called numbers for various local agencies:

For emergencies, please contact:

Ambulance .....713 322-3434  
Police Department.....713 222-3131  
Fire Department .....713 227-2323  
Poison Control .....713 654-1701

Other numbers for assistance:

Veterans Administration..... 713 664-4664  
City of Houston Housing Authority ..... 713 961-1541  
Social Security Administration ..... 713 653-4700  
Immigration Naturalization Service..... 713 847-7918  
Internal Revenue Service ..... 713 541-0440  
Houston Independent School District ..... 713 892-6000  
City Hall..... 713 247-1000

## Tour the Nation's Capitol

To make your visit to the Nation's Capitol more enjoyable, our Washington, D.C. office is able to assist you with obtaining a tour of the White House. The procedure for a tour request is to send a letter to the attention of Ms. Jaiza Page to my office in Washington, DC. The letter should include your name, your telephone number, the date that you wish to visit the White House and the number of guests that are accompanying you. If you have small children, please list their ages.

The White House requests that tour groups also be no smaller than ten people. The White House requires that a tour request be submitted at least six weeks in advance of the date of your proposed tour. Since the White House

receives numerous requests, our office cannot guarantee that tickets will be available for the specific date that you may request. My staff, however, will do their best to accommodate you. Please note that the White House is closed on Sundays and all federal holidays.



*Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee addresses the Detroit NAACP.*

## Flag Requests

Most of you may not be aware that the U.S. House of Representatives provides a service that enables you to fly an American flag over the United States Capitol for special occasions (i.e., birthdays, anniversaries, etc.). Such requests are done through my office. Please call my office at 202-225-3816 to place an order. You can also order online at [www.jacksonlee.house.gov](http://www.jacksonlee.house.gov).

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## Hours of Operation

The hours of operation for my Downtown Houston Office are Monday thru Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and the hours of operation for my Washington, D.C. office are Monday thru Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

### District Office, Main:

The Main Leland Federal Building  
1919 Smith Street, Suite 1180  
Houston, TX 77002  
Phone: (713) 655-0050

### Acres Homes:

6719 West Montgomery Road  
Room 204  
Houston, TX 77091  
Phone: (713) 691-4882

### Washington, D.C.:

2435 Rayburn Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
Phone: (202) 225-3816

## Visit Our Website

Our website online has updated news and press releases, legislative and policy issues, constituent services, and information about the 18th Congressional District in Houston, Texas. We encourage you to visit the website at [www.jacksonlee.house.gov](http://www.jacksonlee.house.gov) to learn more about what is happening in Congress. You can also email the Congresswoman directly from the website, and share your views, suggestions, and comments.