



Your Congressman Reports

Danny K. Davis

Representative in Congress

December 2002 – 7th Congressional District - Illinois

Dear 7th District Resident:

As we conclude the 107th Congress, I take this opportunity to share with you some of the legislative, programmatic and advocacy activities in which I have been involved on your behalf during these past two years and to highlight some of the need areas and to project our legislative and program activities for the coming two years.

To reach my office: 773-533-7520

During this session of Congress we held more than 75 Town Hall Meetings on subjects ranging from education, census, crime prevention, healthcare, Medicare/Medicaid, Social Security, child welfare, international affairs, youth development, business and economic development, contract procurement and host of other issues. These meetings actually provide an opportunity for to hear from you, my constituents, and to govern myself appropriately in the making and shaping of public policy.

During this Congress we debated many important issues including homeland security, possible war with Iraq, education reform, election reform, tax cuts, and many, many more. Unfortunately, a number of issues important to you and to our district did not get resolved. The list of unresolved issues includes, but is not limited to: a prescription drug benefit for seniors under Medicare, increasing the minimum wage, Social Security reform, Patients Bill of Rights, extending unemployment benefits, welfare reform, an economic stimulus package, O'Hare Airport expansion and a bailout plan for United Airlines.

Congressman Davis Meets with Ministers & Clergy Committee To Discuss U.S. HIV/AIDS Policy

On November 20, 2002, Congressman Danny K. Davis met at Malcolm X College with the Ministers and Clergy Committee to discuss our national policy on HIV/AIDS. The meeting was designed to provide information to the Greater Chicago World AID Day Collaborative regarding federal initiatives and to get feedback on how those policies might be further fine tuned to make them more effective.

The World AIDS Day Collaborative is a collective effort by government, business, community, labor and faith-based organizations who mission is to raise awareness about the threat of HIV/AIDS and how best to respond. Their new initiative: *Let's Talk, Let's Test* is a 365 day mobilization in communities all across Chicagoland.



The discussion examined how the HIV/AIDS "message" has been traditionally "marketed" and how to highlight the need for testing, for awareness and for educating people on the devastation the epidemic has brought world wide and in the 7th Congressional District. Among the goals the group set was the testing of between 85 and 120 thousand new people between December 1, 2002 (World AIDS Day) and December 1, 2003. As a follow up on Sunday, December 1, 2002, along with Alderman Ed Smith and Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, I took an AIDS test at the Cook County Jail as part of an effort to encourage young men and women at the facility to also take the test.

Congressman Davis meeting with Ministers and Clergy Committee including (facing the camera) Rev. Marshall E. Hatch of Mt. Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church

The War For Economic Security Must Go Hand in Hand with the War Against Terrorism

The 107th Congress did not complete a number of its most important legislative priorities before adjournment. These include 11 of the 13 bills which set forth our national budget. These bills do more than allocate tax dollars. They set our national priorities. As we head into 2003 it is clear to me that we must see the economic security of the American people as inseparably intertwined with our national security. That must be reflected in the shape of our budget and in the legislation which rates as "most urgent" for the Congress to consider.

The number one item on our agenda must be the extension of the Temporary Extended Unemployment Compensation (TEUC) program. More than 800,000 unemployed workers will face the worst kind of Christmas. They will lose their unemployment benefits on December 28. 41,000 of those workers are right here in Illinois. In addition, no new claims will be accepted as an estimated 95,000 workers each week exhaust regular, state-funded unemployment benefits run out.

This is in addition to the more than 1 million persons who have already exhausted their 13 weeks of temporary unemployment benefits (tragically, recent studies have shown these workers are disproportionately likely to have young children.) Unemployment has jumped sharply and long term unemployment has undergone an even larger increase. The number of long-

term unemployed has doubled in the last year and now exceeds 1.5 million. Increasingly these are white collar workers, many with a college education.



Congressman Davis with Lt. Governor elect Patrick Quinn at press conference discussing economic security and the importance of the low income energy assistance program

On every hand we are facing new evidence of the magnitude and impact of the loss of economic security and the growth of poverty. In just one quarter of this last year more than 130,000 Americans saw the process of foreclosure begin on their homes. Creditors already had more than 400,000 foreclosed homes in their possession. Homelessness is once again on the rise.

We are in an wrenching period of industrial decline, probably the longest such period since the Great Depression which is threatening to distort our entire economy. And, our American consumers, which have accounted for two-thirds of our economic engine in recent years, have been staggered by the current crisis. Household debt reached historic highs. The total value of all forms of outstanding household debt was greater than the total disposable income of all households.

The wealthiest 1 percent reduced their share of the debt by 27 percent, while the middle 20 percent of households increased their share of the debt by 38.8 percent.

In 1997, the top 1 percent of the U.S. population, that is, 2.6 million people, had as much after-tax income as the 100 million Americans with

the lowest income. Twenty-nine percent of working families in the United States with one to three children under age 12 do not earn enough to afford basic necessities such as food, housing, health care, and child care, even during a period of national prosperity. Nearly one-third of families with incomes below twice the poverty threshold faced at least one critical hardship, like going without food, getting evicted, having to double up in housing with another family or not having access to medical care during an acute illness. The U.S. Conference of Mayors reports that emergency food aid requests have increased 19 percent over the last year.

Of families with incomes below the basic income line, half include a parent who worked full time, and nearly 60 percent are two-parent families. More than 75 percent are headed by a worker with a high school degree or more. About one-third live in the suburbs, one-third in the cities, and one-third in rural areas.

We need an economic stimulus to jump-start our economy, and we need it immediately. I support one-time spending of \$110 billion in grants to the states to help them through this period of deficits and to preserve health, education, law enforcement and other critical services as well as school repair and renovation.

While some talk about tax cuts which will primarily benefit the wealthiest 1 percent of taxpayers, and do nothing for the bottom 75 percent, I support a package which focus on the needs of the poor and working people. This should include a \$65 billion to rebate 3.5% of the first \$15,000 of the wages of workers to ease the burden of payroll taxes.

I support: a budget which will increase home energy assistance not decrease it; a budget which will increase JAIBG, which helps States improve facilities and services to incarcerated youth not decrease it; a budget which will increase assistance to our teaching hospitals not decrease it; a budget which will provide a prescription drug benefits for all Americans, not just the very, very poor; a budget which will expand affordable housing programs and Community Development Block Grants not cut them.

A budget using these principles would increase the gross domestic product by 2%, would create 1.5 million new jobs, and would lower unemployment by an entire percentage point. While it would increase the federal deficit for a short period it would bring our economy back to a growing, healthy state more quickly and would protect working families and the most vulnerable of our people during hard times.

Our security depends on America fighting a war on two fronts: the economic front and the national security front. We must do both if we hope to provide real security to our people. Now is the time for our national priorities to reflect the war on two fronts concept.

Davis Opposes War Resolution

The United States House of Representatives voted 296-133 to pass the Joint Resolution, H. J. Res. 114 on October 10, 2002 to authorize President Bush to use the armed forces of the United States to take preemptive action against Iraq for potential threats; and to enforce all relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions regarding Iraq. In addition, the resolution states that the authorization is consistent with the War Powers Act (PL 93-148).

After hearing from, and being in consultation with, many residents of the District, I opposed giving President Bush the authority to take such preemptive action and supported an alternative Resolution calling for the U.S. to utilize all non-military options before using our military. Of course, the President, as Commander-in-Chief, already has the Constitutional authority to defend the nation in case of attack. An overwhelming majority of you who contacted me expressed lack of support for war with Iraq as a first option without our government exhausting all diplomatic alternatives to resolve the potential threat Iraq may pose to the United States.

As we continue to try and make sense of this complex situation, there is no question of the evil of the current Iraqi regime. Consistent with our notion of our responsibilities as a nation it is critical that we show convincing evidence that Iraq poses

an immediate danger or that Iraq has the capacity to attack the United States. We have not exhausted all non-military options; we have not exhausted the potential for collective action with our allies; and we have not exhausted the potential for inspections and a strict embargo on technologies which could be used for weapons of mass destruction.

The use of military force should be a last resort, to be used when, and only when, all other options have failed.

Davis Continues to Push for Expanded Home Ownership

The push for home ownership is high on my agenda, given the fact that only 38% of resident and 28% of African Americans in our district own their own homes. I am consistently looking for ways to expand affordable housing opportunities and continue to work with planners, developers and lenders to maximize those opportunities and enable low and moderate income residents to purchase a home of their own.



Congressman Davis and Westside NAACP President Vera G. Davis (right) talk about affordable housing with constituents at WOW housing expo

I am continuing to work with the City of Chicago, the Chicago Housing Authority, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Illinois Housing Development Authority and private developers to put in place rehabilitation programs so that we may save and utilize as many existing structures as possible. The Chicago Westside NAACP continues to work in conjunction with me in this endeavor to build an exciting schedule of fairs, expositions, seminars and home ownership counseling activities.

Recently Fannie Mae and First Bank, with the participation of Mayor Richard M. Daley and myself, announced the availability of \$12.5 billion for low and moderate income housing loans for the nation. Residents of the 7th District should apply to make use of these resources.

Davis Instrumental in Passage of Health Center Re-authorization

One of the most important issues facing us as a nation, and facing residents of Illinois' 7th Congressional District, is healthcare. With a sluggish economy and with unemployment on the rise, more and more people are losing their health benefits. In fact, more than 43 million Americans are living without health insurance, many of them right here in the 7th District.

Fortunately, community health centers have been developed and have emerged to help meet the needs of this vulnerable population group. We have more than twenty-five community health centers in our District which provide critical services to those in need and without other means of meeting that need. They provide cost-effective, quality health care to the nations poor and medically under-served, including the working poor, the uninsured and other high risk populations.

I was pleased to speak and vote in favor of re-authorization of the health center program for another five year period with a recommended substantial increase in funding. That bill passed, along with re-authorization of the National Health Service Corps program, which helps communities like ours recruit and retain quality health care professionals.

I am pleased to be known in Congress as a champion of community health centers and fully support funding them and the vital contribution they make.

Davis Introduces Legislation to Aid Low Income Tax Payers

During the 107th Congress I introduced several pieces of legislation to assist low income tax payers:

H.R. 3742 would amend the Internal Revenue Code to expand the earned income tax credit for individuals with no qualifying children.

H.R. 3701 would amend the Internal Revenue Code to provide for a temporary ex-offender low income housing credit to encourage the provision of housing, job training and other essential services to ex-offenders through a structured living environment designed to assist ex-offenders in becoming self-sufficient.

H.R. 3612 would amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide individuals with disabilities and older Americans with equal access to community-based attendant services and supports and other purposes.

Ex-offenders Re-entry and Other Criminal Justice Issues Continue to Challenge America and the 7th Congressional District

For the past two years much of our activity has been centered around issues involving ex-offenders. With more than 600,000 expected to be released from the nation's jails and prisons each year for the next several years. Illinois is expected to produce almost thirty thousand ex-offenders each year over the coming years. We have our work cut out for us, especially here in the 7th Congressional District where we have five transitional centers and where poverty, unemployment, homelessness and hopelessness is on the rise.



Congressman Davis and members of ex-offender task force meet with Governor Ryan to discuss criminal justice reform with a focus on ex-offender re-entry. Photo courtesy of Chicago Daily Defender

I have held countless forums, workshops, focus group meetings and rallies promoting understanding of ex-offender issues. I have traveled across the country generating support for my bill: the Public Safety Self Sufficiency Ex-Offender Act of 2002.

On Tuesday, December 17, 2002, I took a delegation to meet with Governor George Ryan in the State of Illinois Building to discuss these issues and plan for a summit to take place in early January 2003.

Davis Introduces Legislation to Prevent Fraud Against Seniors

On June 13, 2002, I introduced legislation expressing the support of the House of Representatives for programs and activities to prevent perpetrators of fraud from victimizing senior citizens. This legislation is designed to educate and

inform senior citizens of potential fraud schemes utilizing the mail, telemarketing and the internet. Last year the Postal Inspection Service responded to 66,000 mail fraud complaints. Shortly after introducing the legislation, I held a press conference at the Parkside Senior Citizens Building at 5670 West Lake Street, Chicago, with the Postal Service as part of an ongoing commitment to ensuring that our seniors are educated about the many different types of fraudulent schemes with which they are confronted.

Call to Participate

My technique of creating and making use of advisory committees and/or task forces continues to be seriously effective. Currently my office has thirty-one actively engaged task forces. They include Adolescent and Juvenile Justice; African Affairs; AIDS/HIV; Art and Culture; Business and Economic Development; Child Welfare; Citizen Participation; Advocacy; Community Redevelopment; Diversity in the Workplace; Drugs and Substance Abuse; Digital Opportunities and Empowerment; Education; Environment; Ex-offenders; International Affairs; Media, Communications and Public Policy; Mental Health; Physically Challenged/Disabilities; Public Safety; Religious Affairs; Reparations; Seniors/Elder Care; Transportation; Veterans Affairs; Welfare and Poverty; Women and Children Issues; Workforce Empowerment and Youth and Child Development.

All of these advisory groups meet on a regular basis and if you are willing to participate please call Ms. Tumia Romero at 773-533-7520.

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