



# Your Congressman Reports

## Danny K. Davis

Representative in Congress

July 2003 – 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District - Illinois

The first six months of the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress have seen activity on many issues which will directly impact our lives in the 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. The House of Representatives has debated and voted on the most extensive revision of Medicare since

**To reach my office: 773-533-7520**  
**[www.house.gov/davis](http://www.house.gov/davis)**

the passage of that landmark law. We have debated and passed several major tax bills which will impact family budgets in the short and the long term. We have considered legislation which will remove traditional Civil Service protection from one third of the federal civilian work force. Currently under consideration is

legislation which will fundamentally undermine Head Start, one of our most successful programs for children. Also under consideration are appropriation bills. The war in Iraq is raging and there continues to be unrest in many other parts of the world, all of which impacts the federal budget and takes money away from domestic needs. I have reintroduced several important pieces of legislation which gained much attention and growing support in the last Congress: The Ex-Offender Self Sufficiency Act and the MiCASSA legislation (which addresses how individuals with disabilities receive assistance.)

Many of you have traveled to Washington to meet with me, and my staff. These meetings have been informative, but most residents are not able to visit the DC office to make their voices heard. Therefore, I have continued my active schedule of Town Hall Meetings where we discuss subjects including education, taxes, crime prevention, healthcare, Medicare/Medicaid, Social Security, child welfare, international affairs, youth development, business and economic development, affirmative action and a host of other issues. These meetings provide meaningful opportunity to hear from you directly and to govern myself appropriately in the making and shaping of public policy. These meetings will continue throughout the year.



Representative Davis meets with activist constituents in his DC office to discuss the state of the economy and the war in Iraq: (Left to right standing) Lauren Lucchesi (intern), Congressman Davis, Sean Terrell (intern), Ethel Williams (Senior Fellow), Oluwatosin Oguntimein (Legislative Correspondent), (Seated left to right) Timuel Black (visiting constituent), Sarah Kinnerr (intern), Betty Wilhoite (visiting constituent) Jill Edwardson (American Medical Students Association Fellow).

As has become tradition, I will be holding my two-day **State-of-the-District Town Hall Meeting on Friday, August 15 and Saturday, August 16**. On page four of this newsletter you will find details of that meeting. One of the reasons the State-of-the-District Town Hall Meetings have been such a great success in past years has been your input in the planning of the meeting. I invite you to continue your part of that process by calling or e-mailing my office to find out how you can participate in that process – or just to offer your suggestions. Either way, your comments and views are welcome.●

### Supreme Court Decision on Affirmative Action at University of Michigan Consistent with Legislation Introduced by Congressman Davis

The recent decision by the U.S. Supreme Court upholding the constitutionality of affirmative action is historic recognition of the struggle to extend our democracy to ensure full participation of minorities and women in educational and economic life of our nation. As the Court stated: ‘effective participation by members of all racial and ethnic groups in the civic life of our Nation is essential if the dream of one Nation, indivisible, is to be realized.’ The court has reaffirmed once again that there is no contradiction between diversity and excellence, and, in fact, neither can exist without the other.

Affirmative Action serves the interests of all Americans – every American has a stake in fairness and democracy. That was reflected in the record number of *amicus curiae* (friend of the court) briefs filed with the court, sixty-six of which favored Michigan’s Affirmative Action policy. The support came from a broad cross section of America: civil rights groups, educational institutions, corporate America, the armed services and elected officials.

Those foresighted pioneers of civil rights, who recognized the need for affirmative action as one tool, an effective tool, to remedy past discrimination deserve our recognition. But even more, we owe them our commitment to continue our work to perfect our democracy and to make the American dream accessible to all, and thus ensure its strength and viability for all.

The decision is consistent with legislation I introduced on March 6 – H.RES.32 – which now has sixty co-sponsors. The resolution expresses the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the ongoing need to provide every qualified American with equal access to opportunity in education, business, and employment and the indispensability of Affirmative Action programs in securing such equal access. ●

## **Rep. Davis Re-Introduces Ex-Offender Self-Sufficiency Act as Affordable Housing Crisis Grows**

Rising home values and falling interest rates gave the residential housing market a boost in 2002. However there are some serious storm clouds on the horizon including rising mortgage delinquency and foreclosure rates, increases in the number of homeowners spending half or more than their incomes on housing, increased mortgage debt levels, and a sharply shrinking supply of affordable housing.

These factors have reinforced the need to address the special problems of ex-offenders who are going to be released from prison this year. About 30,000 of them will be in Illinois. Just 6 of Chicago's 77 communities—Austin, Humboldt Park, North Lawndale, Englewood, West Englewood, and East Garfield Park (all six of these communities are part of the 7th Congressional District!)—accounted for 34 percent of prisoners returning to Chicago in 2001. Unfortunately, as a nation, we have not prepared for these individuals as they come back to neighborhoods and communities. One of the realities of America is that our prisons are filled to the hilt with individuals -- more than 2 million of them. While we are only 5 percent of the world's population, we have 25 percent of the world's prison population.

For that reason, I have re-introduced the Public Safety Ex-Offender Self-Sufficiency Act along with Congressman Mark Souder from Indiana. The legislation is designed to provide structured living arrangements for ex-offenders as they return home, an arrangement that is not designed to cost taxpayers a great deal of money. We use a creative approach to financing by creating a model like the low-income-housing tax credit program, where instead of credits on the basis of population, that we provide credits on the basis of the number of ex-offenders in a State.●

### **Davis Plays Important Role in Education Reform**

I am proud to have been selected to serve as a member of The Committee on Education and the Workforce during the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress and to be contributing to legislation that will impact our district, especially our children. Since March, we have been busy with hearings and mark-ups on twelve pieces of legislation. In the midst of the H.R. 1350 reauthorization for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Committee accepted my amendment to require schools with a disproportionate number of minority children placed in special education to report to the Secretary of Education what they were doing to address the issue. Shortly before the Fourth of July recess, the Committee concluded work on H.R. 1261, the reauthorization of Head Start. Under this bill I introduced two amendments, one to allow for the creation of programs to actively involve fathers and or father figures in Head Start, and one to allow “culture” and “cultural activity” to be a part of the learning process. I am pleased that both amendments were accepted. In the upcoming months, the Committee will be reauthorizing the Higher Education Act. During this process, I plan to work for the passage of H.R. 2504, The Student Loan Consolidation Fairness Act which I introduced in June. This bill will provide relief for borrowers who are paying off consolidated student loans at high interest rates. The flurry of activity surrounding education in the past months has provided me the opportunity to help in the reform of our nation’s system of education.●

### **Davis Re-Introduces MiCASSA – Breaks Down Barriers for Persons with Disabilities**



**Congressman Davis (second from right, back row) and Congressman John Shimkus (right, back row) along with supporters of MiCASSA announce the reintroduction of the legislation at a press conference.**

This year marks the 13th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act and it is entirely appropriate and consistent that we now have before the Congress H.R. 2032, the Medicaid Community-Based Attendant Services and Supports Act, also known as MiCASSA. Much like the promise of the 1965 Civil Rights Act, the promise cannot become a reality until we roll up our sleeves and do the work necessary to eliminate the barriers, which still hinder its full implementation.

The MiCASSA bill is precisely the tool both the States and consumers need to obtain more cost effective long-term services in the most appropriate setting for the individual. Instead of creating a new entitlement, MiCASSA makes the existing entitlement more flexible. It amends Title 19 of the Social Security Act and creates an alternative service called Community Attendant Services and Supports. This allows individuals eligible for Nursing Facility Services or Intermediate Care Facility Services for the Mentally Retarded, regardless of age or disability, the choice to use these dollars for

“Community Attendant Services and Supports.”

These attendant services and supports range from assisting with activities of daily living, such as eating, toileting, grooming, dressing, bathing and transferring, as well as other activities including meal planning and preparation, managing finances, shopping and household chores. ●

### **Congressman Davis Fights for Tax Fairness**

No one likes to pay taxes. From the taxes we pay Americans expect that those tax dollars will be used wisely and effectively. Most basically, we, as Americans, expect that taxes will be levied fairly. On May 28, 2003, President Bush

signed new tax legislation which had been hotly debated in the Congress. I strongly opposed this legislation which will result in:

- Eight million taxpayers from low and middle-income households receiving no tax reductions
- Almost half of all taxpaying Americans receiving less than \$100 in reductions. These 65 million taxpayers will receive an average tax cut of only \$19 in 2003.
- A majority of senior citizens will receive no benefit from the tax reductions.

A second bill, to "fix" the fact that low-income tax payers were left out exploded into a second, \$80 billion, round of tax cuts for special interests. Because of massive differences between the bill passed in the House and the one passed in the Senate the final disposition of this legislation is uncertain.

As a result of the three major tax cuts passed by the Administration in 2001, 2002 and 2003 the wealthiest one percent of Americans will see a tax reduction of 17%. For all the rest of America, 99% of taxpayers, the average reduction will be 5%. My legislative initiatives have consistently supported and preserved the principle of fairness in our tax system and have adhered to fiscal responsibility. ●

### **The President Signs Davis Bill to Provide Relief to the USPS and \$9 Billion Mailing Industry**

Congressman Davis (who serves as Ranking Member of the Special Panel on Postal Reform and Oversight), along with Representatives McHugh, Waxman and Chairman Tom Davis introduced the Civil Service Retirement Act which allows the United States Postal Service (USPS) to recapture excess payments to its pension fund. Recently the Office of Personnel Management discovered that the Postal Service was overpaying its pension fund by billions of dollars.

The House of Representatives passed the bill to correct the overpayment issue and freeze postage rates until at least 2006 by a vote of 424 - 0. The bill passed the Senate and was signed into law by the President on April 23, 2003. The legislation save the Postal Service \$2.4 billion for this budget year and \$2.6 billion next year. These savings will allow the Postal Service to hold down rates and pay down debt. ●

### **Representative Davis Introduces Sickle Cell Treatment Act of 2003**

On April 11, 2003 I, along with Representatives Richard Burr, John Shimkus and Bobby Rush introduced H.R. 736, the Sickle Cell Treatment Act of 2003. This bi-partisan legislation is greatly needed because more than two million Americans, mostly of African descent, have the Sickle Cell trait and more than 70,000 have Sickle Cell Disease (SCD). Every year 130 additional Illinois children are diagnosed with SCD. The Sickle Cell Treatment Act of 2003 will:

- ✓ Provide federal matching funds for Sickle Cell Disease related services;
- ✓ Allow states to get a federal 50-50 match for non-medical expenses (e.g. genetic counseling) related to SCD treatment, and;
- ✓ Create grant programs for 40 health centers nationally for education and treatment of SCD patients for each fiscal year.

It is my hope that this legislation will help save lives and minimize the pain that people with Sickle Cell Disease have to live with. ●

### **June 26, 2003 Floor Statement of Congressman Davis on Medicare Prescription Drug Legislation**

Mr. Speaker, late last night, the House Rules Committee sent a terrible message to our Nation's seniors and hospitals. Two amendments I proposed were not allowed to pass onto the House floor. The first amendment would have stricken the language regarding the "market basket" index. Under the current bill hospitals would lose \$12 billion over the next ten years. The first amendment would have kept the funding streams toward hospitals level so that hospitals would not be forced to make difficult cuts in services and jeopardize patient care.

The second amendment would have assured that the prescription drug benefits we members of Congress enjoy would be comparable to those of Medicare beneficiaries. My colleagues in the Senate passed such an amendment, but the Members of the House Rules Committee seem reluctant to subject themselves to the very same benefits they would give our Nation's seniors. They have sent the clear message that these benefits are not good enough for them, the relatively young and healthy, but are adequate for our Nation's seniors and disabled persons.

Once again this Congress has proven that the Democratic process is not working. Not only are the voices of America's seniors not being heard, but neither are those of Members of Congress. As we go home for the July 4<sup>th</sup> district work period, we will have to explain to our seniors that yes, a prescription drug bill passed, but it will not benefit them. It will not benefit middle America, it will not benefit the poor, it will not benefit those who are already struggling to buy their prescription drugs. Mr. Speaker, I oppose this rule and I oppose the underlying bill. ●

### **Congressman Davis Hosts Job Fair**

On June 22, 2003 Congressman Davis, in co-operation with Governor Blagojevich hosted an all day job fair at Malcolm X College, 1901 West Van Buren, Chicago, Illinois. More than 475 people were tested and completed applications for State jobs while another 50 submitted resumes for professional positions. ●

## Preparations Underway for Congressman Davis' 2003 State-of-the-District Town Hall Meeting

The annual 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District "State of the District" Town Hall meeting and Resource Fair will be held at



**Congressman Davis (standing in back row) listens intently to presentation on need for more public housing during a workshop at last year's State-of-the-District Town Hall Meeting.**

**Malcolm X College  
1901 West Van Buren  
Chicago, Illinois**

**Friday, August 15, 2003  
5:00 p.m. and  
Saturday, August 16, 2003  
9:00 a.m. till 5:00 p.m.**

As always, the "State of the District" Town Hall meeting is open to the entire public – everyone is invited to attend. There is no charge for any part of the meeting.

Your participation at this meeting and our other Town Hall meetings is living proof that democracy is alive and well in the 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. Your participation at this meeting and our other Town Hall meetings refutes the notion that people have somehow "given up" or "don't care". The people of the 7<sup>th</sup> District haven't given up. The people of the 7<sup>th</sup> District do care. They are brimming with new ideas, new plans and new visions.

This is an opportunity to find out what is happening in our district, to discern the needs of the district, and to determine what you can do to help address those needs. Attendees will find valuable information and will find the opportunity to speak out and exchange ideas on issues during dozens of workshops.

Planning meetings are now underway. Your input is invited and most welcome. Please call the number below to get involved in the planning of workshops and other features of the meeting.

Free health screenings will be offered. To pre-register, and for additional information, please call 773-533-7520. I look forward to seeing you at Malcolm X on August 15 and 16! ●



**The Chicago Children's Choir performs at the 2002 State-of-the-District Town Hall meeting . . . to the delight of the audience.**

**U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515-1307**

*Danmyd. Davis*

**Public Document**

**Official Business**

**M.C.  
PRSRT STD**

**ECRWSS  
Residential Customer  
7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District  
Illinois**