

# **PATTY MURRAY'S WASHINGTON VIEW**

**U.S. Senator Patty Murray's Weekly Report to the People of Washington –August 4, 2006**

## **FDA Announcement Far from a Decision on Plan B**

On Monday, just one day before Food and Drug Administration (FDA) nominee Dr. Andrew von Eschenbach was to appear before a Senate Committee considering his confirmation, the FDA announced that it would be moving forward with a "framework" for a potential decision on the over-the-counter status of the Plan B emergency contraception pill.

This vague announcement comes more than three years after the initial application for over-the-counter consideration was submitted, and begs the question: What has the FDA been doing over the past three years when it was supposed to be considering this application?

It remains my belief that the decision making process at the FDA, a process that the health of all Americans depends upon, has been compromised by ideology. Rather than moving this process forward and doing right by the American people, this Administration is continuing to play a game of smoke and mirrors.

This week's announcement is nothing more than another delay tactic. The FDA continues to shirk its duty to serve as an independent agency dedicated to the goal of the promotion of sound science and the well-being of the American people. Senator Clinton and I will maintain our hold on Dr. von Eschenbach's nomination until a decision is made.

### **FOLLOW UP ON THIS STORY**

During his confirmation hearing I questioned Dr. Von Eschenbach on the delays in Plan B, and the need to keep politics out of the FDA decision making process.

Listen: <http://murray.senate.gov/video/060801-fda.mp3>

## **Saddened by a Terrible Act of Violence**

Last week's shooting at the Seattle's Jewish Federation was a tragedy that the people of Seattle and our state will not soon forget. My heart goes out to the victims and their families.

Freedom of religion and respect for diverse communities is what America is built on and what continues to make our nation strong. We can agree to disagree on international policy, but we must not compound an international tragedy with senseless violence here at home.

## **Opposing Republican Tax Bill that Would Hurt Washington Minimum Wage Workers, State Economy**

This week Senate Republicans introduced and attempted to move forward the so-called, "Trifecta" tax bill. I opposed this legislation because it is wrong for America and because it would end up cutting the pay of many of the hardest working Americans. The bill was defeated on a procedural vote.

While there were provisions that I did support in the bill, I could not vote for a Republican plan that plunges our nation

further into debt while reducing the wages of our nation's workers. This bill would have hurt all Americans.

I opposed this bill because it directly overrides the will of Washington state voters. By initiative, Washington state residents supported a minimum wage law that keeps pace with inflation because we understand the needs of our working families and our communities. Passage of that initiative represented real progress and it continues to produce a positive impact on people's lives in my state every day. I will not be part of an effort that turns back the clock on this important economic lifeline.

The estate tax needs to be reformed. We need to restore fairness to our tax system by extending the deductibility of state sales tax. We need the R&D tax credit, and the tuition tax deduction. And we need to help our timber communities. I support these measures, but we can't afford them at any cost.

This bill is a reflection of the Congressional leadership's priorities. The fact that this bill punishes hard working Americans is wrong - it is the wrong priority for our country, and it makes this the wrong bill at the wrong time for Washington state, our economy, and America's workers.

I'm especially disappointed in this cynical Republican ploy because I believe this bill could have met a different fate. Many of my Democratic colleagues – like me – want to see real progress made on many of the provisions contained in this bill. We stand ready to pass these popular tax provisions, a fair increase in the minimum wage, and even some form of estate tax reform that protects our long-term fiscal outlook – but the Republicans chose politics over good policy this week.

## **Senate Fails to Address America's Energy Needs**

We need a comprehensive energy policy that will meet America's energy needs, lower rates for consumers and businesses, and reduce the tremendous burden being imposed on our farmers. This week the Senate had an opportunity to take a comprehensive approach, but unfortunately Republicans blocked efforts to improve the bill and left us with a flawed proposal - S.3711 - that I could not support.

Our country needs to do more domestically to meet our energy needs rather than continuing to rely so heavily on imported oil, but this bill imposes too high a price on Washington state and misdirects resources away from American taxpayers to just a few states.

Washington state's coastline must continue to be protected from offshore oil and gas drilling, and that is one of the reasons why I voted against this proposal. S.3711 only protected the coastline off Florida, but did not protect Washington or any other coastal state.

I also opposed this bill because it would divert nearly 40% of the revenue generated from leases under this bill to just four states. As we face massive deficits and a costly war in Iraq, now is not the time to divert these funds to a handful of states.

I'm deeply disappointed that we were not allowed to resolve my concerns and were not allowed to add provisions on biofuels, alternative energy and renewable fuels. As this bill moves forward, I will continue to work with my colleagues from Washington state to fight for our region, our consumers, our farmers and our future.

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