

Congressman Jim Kolbe

8th District Arizona

Newsletter

Issue 6 ♦ March 2006



Inside This Issue...



Border security and immigration reform remain important problems to solve for our national security. That is why Rep. Kolbe brought 8 of his colleagues to the Arizona border for a two day tour of the in March. Rep. Kolbe wants members from other parts of the country to see first-hand the strains illegal immigration causes on border communities. The delegation visited a number of sites, and the information learned will no doubt play a part in the debate as Congress continues to act on reform of our immigration laws.

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Predator to Arizona

The National Guard announced it is bringing its newest Predator squadron to Davis-Monthan and Ft. Huachuca. This means more jobs in southern Arizona.

Read more about the newest program at our military installations...



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More than one million beneficiaries are already seeing discounts..but if you haven't already signed up for the new Medicare Prescription Drug Program, only a few weeks remain to avoid paying a penalty.

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BORDER SECURITY

Kolbe Leads Congressional Delegation to Arizona-Mexico Border



National Guard troops give Rep. Kolbe and other members of Congress safety instructions before taking an aerial view of the Arizona-Mexico border.

No experience compares to seeing something with your own eyes. Illegal immigration is an issue that affects every person in this country, regardless of location. However, unless you live along the border, it is impossible to understand the magnitude of the problem. That is why Rep. Kolbe felt it necessary to bring his colleagues from states like California, Texas, Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Puerto Rico to the border.

With the debate around border security and immigration reform continuing to heat up in Congress, Rep. Kolbe invited members from across the country to see the significant problems caused by illegal immigration. On March 4 and 5, eight Members of Congress joined him on a land and air tour of the Arizona-Mexico border.

Upon landing at Fort Huachuca, the delegation immediately boarded Blackhawk helicopters with Border Patrol and the Arizona National Guard for an hour-long aerial view of the border. Rep. Kolbe pointed out trails in the dirt paved by border crossers. The delegation flew over the Douglas and Naco points of entry and viewed Border Patrol surveillance towers.

At night, Border Patrol took the delegation to the Naco point of entry. The group saw the detailed night surveillance camera control room, learned about the processing of illegal immigrants who are caught and toured the facilities. The group also used night-vision goggles.

On Sunday, the delegation listened as Sheriff Larry Dever, Supervisor Pat Call, and Mike Carter from Southwest Arizona Medical Center discussed their experiences with illegal immigration. The delegation toured a ranch directly on the border. While there, the ranchers described the hardships they face on a daily basis due to illegal immigration.

These members were in awe at the expansive nature and mountainous terrain of the border in Arizona. Many of the members said they “had no idea” the border in Arizona was like this.

The situation in Arizona is unique. Rep. Kolbe only wishes all 535 members of the House and Senate would come see first-hand the problems we face. Then, we will have an honest debate on this issue and be able to come up with realistic solutions.



Rep. Kolbe, with Rep. David Dreier, Chairman of the Rules Committee, listen as a rancher describes the impact of illegal border crossings.

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Two Part Immigration Series Hits Airwaves

“The Jim Kolbe Show: From the Desert to the Dome” kicked off a two-part series earlier this month on border security and immigration reform.

The show features a panel of experts from all sides of the immigration debate discussing the various problems with our immigration laws and possible solutions. Joining Rep. Kolbe are Tamar Jacoby from the Manhattan Institute, Frank Sharry with the National Immigration Forum, Mark Krikorian from the Center for Immigration Studies, and Stephen Dinan, border security reporter for the Washington Times.

It’s not too late to catch the first part of the show – it will air one more time in April before the second portion begins.



The Jim Kolbe Show **Schedule:**

Part One:

April 2, 8:30am, Comcast 72 or Cox 97

Part Two:

April 2, 7:00am, Cox 7

April 4, 8:00am, Comcast 73 or Cox 98

April 9, 8:30am, Comcast 72 or Cox 97

April 11, 8:00am, Comcast 73 or Cox 98

April 16, 8:30am, Comcast 72 or Cox 97

April 18, 8:00am, Comcast 73 or Cox 98

April 23, 8:30am, Comcast 72 or Cox 97

April 25, 8:00am, Comcast 73 or Cox 98

April 30, 8:30am, Comcast 72 or Cox 97

May 2, 8:00am, Comcast 73 or Cox 98

**Please check your local listings for
alternate viewing times**

KOLBE AIDE TO BE IN GREEN VALLEY, SAHUARITA

District Aide Bev Collier will be available to meet with Green Valley and Sahuarita residents on April 20 to discuss concerns about federal agencies such as the Social Security Administration, the Veterans Administration and the Internal Revenue Service.

Also available will be information regarding Presidential greetings and flag requests, as well as Congressional Tours of the White House, the U.S. Department of State, the Kennedy Center, the U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing, the Library of Congress, the National Archives, the Washington National Cathedral and Mount Vernon.

Collier will be available to meet with residents from the Green Valley area from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 a.m. at the Green Valley Community Coordinating Council office in the Green Valley Mall. She will also be available to meet with residents in the Sahuarita area from 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Sahuarita Town Hall. The GVCCC office is located in Suite 14B on the southwest side of the mall. The Sahuarita Town Hall is located at 725 West Via Rancho Sahuarita, just south of the Sahuarita Post Office.

Although appointments are not necessary, you may schedule an appointment by calling (520) 881-3588.

From Jim's Mailbag

Dear Congressman Kolbe,

I am shocked to hear the US has sold ownership of ports to a company in the Middle East. I am concerned this sale will open our ports to potential terrorist attacks.

--Douglas, AZ

Thank you for contacting me to express your views regarding the sale of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation (P&O) to Dubai Ports World (DP World). As you might imagine, like all other Members of Congress, I have received very many phone calls, letters and e-mails on this subject, most of them opposed to the sale.

Since I took a somewhat contrary position to that adopted by almost everyone else in Congress, let me explain my reasons. But first, we should all acknowledge that port security is vital to our homeland defense. There is probably no other part of our internal defenses as vulnerable to terrorist attack as our maritime ports. Literally thousands of containers pass through these ports on a daily basis and few of them are ever opened for inspection. They are perfect receptacles for people smuggling drugs, weapons, even humans--or worse--chemical, biological, or a dirty nuclear weapon.

But the manager of the port has little or nothing to do with the security or lack of it. That is the responsibility of Homeland Security and off our shores, of the Coast Guard. They are the ones that decide which containers will be inspected; they are the ones that examine the ship's manifest and the contents and the port of origin of every container. The terminal management maintains the facilities, decides which ship docks where and which trucks and cranes will be used for loading and unloading. They make no decisions about the security. Nor do they own the ports. In almost all cases those remain in the hands of a municipal or state authority, very much as most airports are owned. Incidentally, about 80% of U.S. ports are managed by foreign owned firms and this has posed no problem for our security to date.

I am concerned about all the controversy and publicity this issue has raised for a number of reasons. First and foremost, I think it diverts our attention from the very real issues of inadequate port security that exists today. I happen to know, for instance, that recommendations were made to the Secretary of Homeland Security to improve port security. Yet, not a single one of those recommendations has been implemented to date. Congress needs to be focusing on this inadequate performance by DHS.

Second, Dubai is the largest port in the world for U.S. warships outside of the United States. Last year, 56 warships and 590 supply vessels docked in Dubai (in the port managed by DP World) and 77,000 soldiers, sailors and airmen went ashore for liberty in Dubai. This is the main gateway for all of our supplies going to Iraq. But even given the important role Dubai plays in our engagement in Iraq, I would not hesitate to deny a Dubai owned company from operating the port if it posed any threat to national security. But since everyone with knowledge and experience on this matter has concluded that it does not pose such a threat, denying the sale to DP World has only needlessly jeopardized our relationship with an important ally in the war against terror.

Third, the signal we send to the entire world with this action is that we are an unreliable investment partner. There were a set of rules to be followed for review and decision making about this proposed purchase. We simply ignored them and blocked the sale after it had been agreed to by all parties. Such a process that does not adhere to the rule of law begins to make the United States look like a "banana republic" and is likely to have significant negative consequences for our own investments in other countries. Indeed, this was confirmed to me recently by a major investor from Singapore who e-mailed me that they were reconsidering a number of their major investments in the United States. These are investments that create jobs for American workers.

It is for these reasons that I voted against an amendment offered in the Appropriations Committee to specifically block the sale of P&O to DP World. Subsequently, DP World announced they would sell their interest in the U.S. port operations to an American interest, if one can be found. At this point we can only hope that this issue can be put quickly behind us and Congress can focus on the real issue--port security.

Sincerely,



If you have a question or comment, log onto www.house.gov/kolbe.
Click on the "Contact Jim" link and simply fill out the form with your comments!

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

H.Res. 357, Honoring Justice Sandra Day O'Connor – Honors Justice Sandra Day O'Connor on the occasion of her retirement from the U.S. Supreme Court. It passed the House on March 1.

S. 1777, Katrina Emergency Assistance Act – On March 6, the President signed this bill, which extends unemployment assistance made available to individuals eligible under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act as a result of the disaster declarations made for Hurricane Katrina or Hurricane Rita.

H.R. 4167, National Uniformity Food Act – This bill amends the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to provide for uniform food safety warning notification requirements. It passed the House on March 8.

H.R. 4472, Children's Safety and Violent Crime Reduction Act – Requires each state, territory, and federally recognized Indian tribe to maintain a sex offender registry, prescribes registration, notification, and verification requirements and penalties for violations, and establishes the Jessica Lunsford Address Verification Program and the Megan Nicole Kanka and Alexandra Nicole Zapp Community Program. It passed the House on March 8.

S. 2271, USA PATRIOT Act Reauthorization – Amends the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 (FISA) to allow a person receiving a production order (an order from the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation) to produce any tangible thing, such as a book, document, or record to challenge its legality. It also extends the expiration of critical law enforcement tools to fight terrorism. This bill was signed into law on March 9.

H.R. 2829, Office of National Drug Control Policy Reauthorization – Amends the Office of National Drug Control Policy Reauthorization Act of 1998 to reauthorize the Office through FY 2011. It passed the House on March 9.

H.R. 4911 Higher Education Extension Act – This bill extends the programs under the Higher Education Act through June 30, 2006. It passed the House on March 14.

S. 2363 – This bill, which passed the House on March 14 and is awaiting the President's signature, allows states that were in the program on September 30, 2004, to continue to waive statutory and regulatory requirements applicable to certain federally-funded education programs until the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

H.Res. 698 – The resolution, which passed on March 14 in the House, expresses the sense of the House of Representatives that all Americans should participate in a moment of silence to reflect upon the service and sacrifice of members of the United States Armed Forces both at home and abroad.

H.Con.Res. 354 – This resolution expresses continued support for requiring an institution of higher education to provide military recruiters with access to the institution's campus and students at least equal in quality and scope to that which is provided to any other employer in order to be eligible for the receipt of federal funds. It passed the House on March 14.

S. 1184 – This legislation waives passport fees for the widow, widower, child, parent, grandparent, brother, or sister of a deceased member of the armed forces traveling abroad to visit such member's grave or to attend such member's funeral or memorial service. S. 1184 is awaiting Presidential signature.

S. 2320 – The legislation advances funds for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) to the next fiscal year. The bill also increases funding for LIHEAP allotments to states, insular areas, and Indian tribes, and for energy crisis intervention. S. 2320 passed the House on March 15 and is awaiting Presidential approval.

H.R. 4939 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, the Global War on Terror, and Hurricane Recovery – Provides \$67.6 billion in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. The bill provides \$9.55 billion for FEMA's Disaster Relief Fund. The bill requires FEMA to provide better reporting of the expenditures of disaster assistance funds as well as the specific methodologies used to allocate funds. It passed the House on March 16.



Deadline Approaching!!

PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE

for Arizona Retirees



Important Phone Numbers:

Medicare: 1-800-MEDICARE

Social Security Administration: 1-800-772-1213

State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP):
1-800-432-4040

At the end of 2003, Congress enacted a new law to help pay for your medications through the Medicare program. Many of you have already taken advantage of the new prescription drug benefit by signing up for a plan. In fact, it is estimated that nearly 117,000 people in southeastern Arizona will be eligible for savings under the new benefit.

This new benefit, which officially began on January 1, 2006, is voluntary. If you are satisfied with your current coverage, you do not need to change anything. But, if you do not already have prescription drug coverage, or if you are looking for better coverage, the new benefit is worth considering. Everyone who is on Medicare is eligible for the benefit, regardless of income. Extra help will be available for those with limited incomes, and a choice of plans will be given so you can pick the one that best meets your specific health care needs.

Medicare prescription drug coverage can help you by covering both brand name and generic prescription drugs at participating pharmacies close to where you live. I hope you will take a moment to read about the new benefit, talk it over with your family and physician, and consider how it could help you pay for your prescription drugs.

Deadline to Sign Up Penalty-Free is Approaching!

May 15, 2006 is the last day you can join a plan without having to pay a penalty. You can still sign up after May 15, but you will be charged a fee.

AIR FORCE PREDATOR TO BE BASED AT DAVIS-MONTHAN & FT. HUACHUCA

Great news for southern Arizona's military installations! The National Guard announced in early March that the Air Force's newest Predator squadron will be based out of Davis-Monthan Air Force Base and Ft. Huachuca.

The newly formed Squadron will require an additional 120 personnel, and will increase to more than 350 when fully staffed and operational. The Squadron will consist of pilots, sensor operators, maintenance, and other support personnel.

Since the first flight in 1995, Predators have flown more than 3,000 missions and over 130,000 flight hours, of which more than half have been during combat area deployments to the Balkans,

Southwest Asia, and the Middle East where these Predator aircraft operate in support of U.S. and NATO forces. The new Arizona National Guard Predator unit will be deployed on missions worldwide.



This particular Predator unit was initially delayed until Rep. Kolbe, Senator John McCain, and Governor Janet Napolitano

stepped in. By working with the Pentagon, they were able to reverse the decision and get the new unit here immediately. Arizona's climate and training environment were key factors in the latest decision.

The new unit will begin operations in Arizona by the end of this year.

Kolbe Visits USS Tucson

Rep. Kolbe (R-AZ) was thrilled to have time to tour the USS Tucson submarine in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii in February. Rep. Kolbe was on his way back from a week-long Congressional Delegation trip to Indonesia and East Timor. During the stop in Hawaii, Rep. Kolbe met with crew members of the USS Tucson, toured the ship and had lunch with the crew.

This is not Rep. Kolbe's first visit to the ship, named in honor of the city of Tucson. He was the principal speaker at the christening ceremony of the USS Tucson in March 1994.

Tucson was the 56th of 62 Los Angeles class submarines authorized to be built by Congress. Los Angeles class submarines are the most advanced vessels in the world. Their mission is to hunt down and destroy enemy naval forces alone or in battle group operations, lay mines off enemy ports, provide covert intelligence, support Navy, Army, and Air Force special forces, and conduct cruise missile strikes against targets ashore. The Tucson measures 360 feet in length and can carry a crew of 141.



Rep. Kolbe participated in the christening of the USS Tucson on March 19, 1994 in Newport News, VA.



In Pearl Harbor, HI, Rep. Kolbe discusses the USS Tucson's involvement in military operations in the war against terrorism.