



Congressman **Jim Sensenbrenner**

News From Congress

NUMBER 167 - JULY 2005

Legal Reform Laws Receive Bipartisan Votes

In the first few months of this year, President Bush signed into law two important legal reform bills processed by the Judiciary Committee, which I chair.

The first law, authored by me, was a major reform of the bankruptcy laws. The most important feature of this new law requires that debtors who have the ability to repay all or part of their debts, be required to try to do so before they can get a bankruptcy discharge. Hopefully, this will slow down passing on these debts, through higher prices for goods and services, to those who pay their bills on time.

Another provision of the new law closes the "millionaire's mansion loophole" where debtors in eight states (not Wisconsin) can shield most of their assets in a large house. The law also requires credit counseling before someone can file for bankruptcy, and increases the priority for unpaid child support so children don't fall victim to the irresponsible behavior of their parent. This bankruptcy reform bill passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 302 to 126, with 73 Democrats joining 229 Republicans to approve it.

The second bill reforms class action lawsuits by establishing uniform standards so that a single county court cannot set

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President Signs Class Action Bill

Congressman Sensenbrenner, along with other Members of the House and Senate, look as the President signs into law the Class Action Fairness Act, one of two critical legal reform bills worked on by Representative Sensenbrenner.

President Signs REAL ID Legislation

On May 11th, President Bush signed into law my REAL ID border security bill. It was included as a part of the Emergency Wartime Supplemental Appropriations Act.

As signed, the REAL ID Act contains four important provisions. Most importantly, state drivers' licenses cannot be used for a federal purpose, such as boarding an airplane or entering a courthouse, unless the applicants prove that they are legally present in the country. Illegal aliens may obtain driving permits not valid for identification purposes so they can purchase auto insurance. Wisconsin is one of nine states which issues licenses to illegal aliens. Unless the legislature and Governor Doyle approve a bill by State Representative Mark Gundrum of New Berlin, Wisconsin residents will have to procure other identification to use for federal purposes.

Other parts of the REAL ID Act will allow completion of the holes in the border fence in southern California, which have funneled illegal entries into the United States. Also, our asylum laws have been significantly tightened to prevent fraud in such a manner that those who are truly fleeing persecution can obtain asylum. Additionally, the Act makes deportation easier for people who should not have been granted entry into the country because of their terrorist backgrounds.

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Reminder...

Office Hours & Town Hall Meetings Page 2



Office Hours

Monday, August 1

9:00am Newburg Village Hall
9:45am Fredonia Village Hall
10:30am Belgium Village Hall
11:15am Saukville Village Hall
1:30pm River Hills Village Hall
2:15pm Fox Point Village Hall
3:00pm Bayside Village Hall

Tuesday, August 2

11:30am Butler Village Hall
12:15pm Lannon Village Hall
2:00pm Sussex Village Hall
3:00pm Jackson Village Hall
3:45pm Addison Town Hall
4:30pm Kewaskum Public Library

Wednesday, August 3

8:30am Helenville Fire Hall
9:15am Sullivan Village Hall
10:00am Palmyra Village Hall
11:00am Dousman Village Hall
11:45am Genesee Town Hall
12:30pm Wales Village Hall
2:00pm Nashotah Village Hall
2:45pm Merton Town Hall
3:30pm Merton Village Hall
4:15pm Pewaukee Village Hall

I host scores of Town Hall Meetings and Office Hours to provide you with the opportunity to express your views on the issues before Congress or to help you with problems you may be experiencing in dealing with a federal agency. This newsletter includes my schedule of meetings for the next several weeks, and I invite you to attend one or more of them. Whether you need help or not, I hope you'll stop by to say hello and introduce yourself. Please contact my district office if you require special accommodations to attend.

Town Hall Meetings

Sunday, July 17

7:00pm Richfield Town Hall

Sunday, July 24

7:00pm Waukesha State Bank
(Waukesha Branch Community Room)

Sunday, July 31

7:00pm Cedarburg Police Department

Tuesday, August 2

9:00am Shorewood Village Hall

Thursday, August 4

9:00am Wauwatosa Public Library
7:00pm Hartford City Hall

Saturday, Sept. 10

9:00am Port Washington
Police Department

3:00pm West Bend City Hall

Saturday, Sept. 17

9:00am Oconomowoc City Hall

Monday, Sept. 19

1:00pm Whitefish Bay Village Hall

7:00pm New Berlin Municipal Court

Sunday, Sept. 25

7:00pm Menomonee Falls Village Hall

Medical College and Children's Hospital Make Strides in Research

Medical research is vital to Americans' health, as well as to the economy of Southeast Wisconsin. Nowhere is this more evident than at the Medical College of Wisconsin and Children's Hospital, where breakthroughs in science are saving lives, including the life of rabies victim Jeanna Giese, and creating good-paying jobs that drive our economy.

Over the past few years, I have helped the Medical College of Wisconsin achieve federal funding for a biomedical research and technology incubator. I am also working to help the Children's Hospital of Wisconsin obtain funding for the Children's Research Institute. Children's Hospital was recently recognized as one of the best children's hospitals in the country with its # 3 ranking by *Child* magazine. The two hospitals ranked ahead of Children's were both cited for their extensive research capacity.

At present, Children's does not have adequate research facilities. Its facilities are outdated and undersized for the type and amount of care being provided by the institution. Currently, it has 24,000 square feet of research space in multiple locations; upon completion of the new facility, Children's will have 90,000 square feet of space and could add 100 new researchers to its staff by 2010. The completion of this facility will allow Children's Hospital to conduct research in a manner more akin to its peer institutions.

Last year, Children's received national media attention for saving Jeanna's life. This was the first instance in the world where a patient survived the rabies virus without receiving a vaccination. The treatment protocol developed at Children's has the potential to be used throughout the world in areas where rabies is prevalent. But this type of innovative work would be threatened if the hospital cannot expand its research capacity.

This research, and other work being done on juvenile diabetes, leukemia, and other childhood diseases, offers great hope. I will continue to work to ensure that not only does this research get done, but that it gets done right here in Southeast Wisconsin.

Patriot Act Reauthorization Debated

After September 11th, Congress passed the USA Patriot Act, which significantly increased the powers of law enforcement in order to prevent future attacks. I was the principal author of this important law, but included a “sunset” of four years so that Congress could review whether the appropriate balance between increased law enforcement powers and respect for civil liberties was established. As a result, 16 separate sections of the Patriot Act were “sunsetting” effective December 31, 2005.

Since April of this year, the House Judiciary Committee has held 12 separate hearings of the 16 “sunsetting” parts. Witnesses from both the Bush Administration and its harshest critics have appeared, including Attorney General Alberto Gonzales and his deputy, James Comey. The hearings have shown that 13 parts are non-controversial and 3 are. In July, the Committee will

debate a bill extending parts of the Act and amending others in response to the hearings.

There is no question that the Patriot Act has made America safer. Since September 11th, federal terrorism investigations have resulted in charges against more than 400 suspects, and more than half of those charged have been convicted. Terror cells have been broken up in New York, Oregon, Virginia and Florida by federal and local law enforcement. Moreover, terrorist operatives and supporters have been prosecuted in California, Texas, New Jersey, Illinois, North Carolina and Ohio. Yet, through all this, it is important to note that NONE of the 16 sections of the Patriot Act have been held unconstitutional by a federal court.

Many critics of the actions of the Bush Administration’s Justice Department have implied that the Patriot Act caused the actions they oppose. The Patriot Act has

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Legal Reform Laws Receive Bipartisan Votes

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national economic policy. It regulates lawyers’ fees and coupon settlements so that members of the plaintiff class don’t get coupons for small discounts on products and services of the defendant, while the lawyers for the lawsuit walk away with millions of dollars in fees. The class action bill passed the House by a vote of 279 to 149, with 50 Democrats joining 229 Republicans to approve it.

Congress has worked long and hard to see these pieces of legislation enacted into law. It isn’t fair for people who struggle to make ends meet and pay their bills on time to then have to foot the bill for those who “give up” and take the easy way out by declaring bankruptcy. While there are undoubtedly people who legitimately need a hand to get out of a difficult financial situation - and the new bankruptcy law makes every effort to assist them - there are far too many who relied on the old legislation and loopholes in the law to avoid taking responsibility for their spendthrift ways.

In a similar vein, Americans should not be expected to bankroll lawyers who make out like bandits through astronomical legal fees as they go trolling for corporations with deep pockets, sometimes crippling a business so that they can be paid. There is something to be said for fairness, and these legal reform laws attempt to level the playing field for Americans who play by the rules.

President Signs REAL ID Legislation

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Before being incorporated into the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill, the REAL ID Act passed the House of Representatives on February 10th, by a vote of 261 to 161. Forty-two Democrats joined 219 Republicans to pass this bill. As evidenced by the intense media coverage, the fight to pass this common-sense legislation was long and heated, but in the end, Congress and the President did the right thing.



Sensenbrenner and Gundrum Discuss the Merits of the REAL ID Legislation

Congressman Sensenbrenner and State Representative Mark Gundrum discuss Wisconsin’s version of the REAL ID Act, modeled after the federal law sponsored by Representative Sensenbrenner, at a press conference at Mitchell Field earlier this year.

FLAGS FLOWN OVER THE US CAPITOL

A new United States flag with a personally signed certificate marking the day it flew over the U.S. Capitol is available at cost (including postage) from my office. If you would like to place an order, please make your check or money order payable to "SENSENBRENNER OFFICE SUPPLY ACCOUNT" and send it along with this order form to the address below. Please allow 4 to 8 weeks for processing and delivery of your order. **Limit 3 per household.**

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Grand Total			\$

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Patriot Act Reauthorization Debated *(continued from page 3)*

absolutely nothing to do with indefinite detentions of aliens under the material witness or enemy combatant laws. Nor does it relate in any way whatsoever to activities at the Guantanamo Bay detention camp or military commissions established

to try detainees. Those who allege that the Patriot Act authorized these actions are misleading the public, and in the process, undermining the work of Congress, as we attempt to protect our nation, and Americans, from future attacks.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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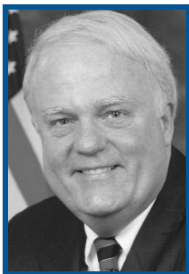
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Congressman **Jim Sensenbrenner**

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