

CAPITOL HILL UPDATE

REP. JIM GERLACH (PA-06)

Friday, July 29, 2005

www.gerlach.house.gov

NASA Successfully Returns to Space

House Passes Medical Liability Reform Legislation



Washington -- Congressman Jim Gerlach voted this week in favor of preserving quality health care options for all people by supporting the HEATLH (Help Efficient, Accessible, Low-Cost, Timely Health Care) Act, H.R. 5. The HEALTH Act passed the House by a vote of 230 to 194.

“Medical malpractice insurance rates are at a crisis level in southeastern Pennsylvania and H.R. 5 will help reform the health care system to keep premiums down and care available to all Pennsylvanians,” Rep. Gerlach said. “It doesn’t take a trained eye to see that Pennsylvania’s best and brightest doctors are fleeing the state in droves.”

The HEALTH Act safeguards patients’ access to care through the following common sense reforms:

- o Places limits on the contingency fees lawyers can charge to increase the share of the damage awards.
- o Enacts a ‘fair share’ rule to ensure that damages are allocated fairly, in direct proportion to fault.
- o Limits the amount of time after the date of injury a case may be filed to preserve evidence and the memory of a witness.
- o Enacts a \$250,000 limit on non-economic damages to act as a floor, states are empowered to increase or decrease this amount as they see fit.

High malpractice insurance rates are forcing physicians to practice defensive medicine, ordering unnecessary tests

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Space Shuttle Discovery shortly after liftoff from Florida on way to the International Space Station, its first mission in more than two years. (AP Photo)

Washington -- Congressman Jim Gerlach released the following statement after the space shuttle Discovery successfully returned to outer space Tuesday morning:

“This is a magnificent day for NASA and the Discovery crew as we return to space on our nation’s first shuttle mission in more than two years. As we mark the first of what I hope are many safe return trips to space, it’s important that we take a moment to remember the fine men and women of the space shuttle Columbia who this nation lost on a very sad February day in 2003.”

“I truly believe that those brave astronauts would have wanted us to learn from that incident and to continue with our plans for seeking something extraordinary in the stars above.

Remember, it was an explorer’s instinct, courage and desire for greatness that fueled this country’s growth and progress over the years. Today is the first step in a renewed vision of space exploration that will someday get us back to the Moon and beyond, and I commemorate NASA for working so diligently to ensure the safety of the shuttle crew.”

House Passes Comprehensive Energy Policy

Washington -- Congressman Jim Gerlach released the following statement after the House of Representatives passed H.R. 6, the Energy Policy Act of 2005 Conference Report. After voting against the original version that passed the House in April, Congressman Gerlach was pleased to see that the conferees made substantial changes to the legislation. The conference report passed the House Thursday afternoon by a 275 to 156 vote, with 71 Democrats supporting the bill.

“The Energy legislation I voted for today makes a significant investment in new technologies and renewable energy development and is vastly different from the version I voted against in April. While it doesn’t complete our journey toward full energy independence, it’s a significant start,” Rep. Gerlach explained.

How to Reach Congressman Gerlach

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Visit the Web site for more information about H.R. 6, the Energy Policy Act of 2005.

