

Nancy Johnson



Fifth District, Connecticut

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Contact: Brian Schubert
(202) 225-4476

Johnson: 108th Congress a “Resounding Success”

Congresswoman Marks 2003-2004 Accomplishments

Medicare Rx Drug Coverage, Tax Relief for Families and Workers Protecting Connecticut’s Rivers, \$100 Million for Fifth District

NEW BRITAIN, CT – Congresswoman Nancy Johnson today called the 108th Congress a “resounding success” for the people of the Fifth District, marking her accomplishments to create jobs, make health care more affordable and accessible, keep taxes in check, and protect the environment.

“The past two years have been a resounding success for Connecticut’s Fifth District,” Johnson said. “We passed landmark legislation to create the Medicare prescription drug benefit, the biggest expansion of that program ever. We extended crucial tax cuts for middle-class families and cut taxes for manufacturers so they could grow and create jobs.”

“I have been invigorated and inspired by the new Fifth District and I am honored to represent it in Congress. I’ve fought to bring home more than \$100 million in federal funds to improve our communities and create jobs. I’ve protected local social services and am working with local advocates to protect Connecticut’s environment. I am confident we can build on these accomplishments in the next year,” Johnson added.

Below is an overview of Johnson’s accomplishments during the 108th Congress, which adjourned last week.

CREATED MEDICARE DRUG COVERAGE, NEW BENEFITS

Johnson was a principal author of the landmark law adding prescription drug coverage to Medicare. While the **Medicare Prescription Drug, Modernization and Improvement Act** is already saving seniors money on the cost of their prescriptions with the Medicare-approved discount card, in 2006 the full drug benefit will take effect. The benefit will save most seniors at least 75 percent off the cost of their drugs for an affordable premium and deductible. Seniors with low incomes will pay next to nothing for each prescription, with no premium and no deductible.

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In addition to the comprehensive drug coverage, the law creates new benefits that will keep seniors healthier and living more independent lives, including a “Welcome to Medicare” physical and new screenings for diabetes and heart disease. As a result of Johnson’s leadership, Medicare will now cover disease management programs to improve the quality of care for seniors with chronic illnesses and keep them healthier.

The prescription drug law also incorporated Johnson’s reform legislation, the **Medicare Contracting and Regulatory Reform Act of 2003**, which strengthened the program to ensure fair, accurate, and timely payments of claims for Medicare beneficiaries. The measure also created the 1-800-MEDICARE hotline so seniors can get answers to their questions, in addition to a similar hotline for providers of health services. These new resources will get problems solved early and quickly.

Signed into law in December 2003, the bill is the largest expansion of Medicare since the program was created in 1965.

CREATED AND PROTECTED CONNECTICUT JOBS

Johnson helped pass the **American Jobs Creation Act of 2004**, which gives \$70 billion in tax breaks to domestic manufacturers to help them compete against foreign competitors. The law (the “Jobs Bill”) extended previously passed provisions that allow small manufacturers and businesses to write off equipment purchases, provisions that have reversed an 8-year decline in capital investment. The state’s largest manufacturing coalition called the Jobs Bill a “huge positive for Connecticut manufacturing workers.” President Bush signed the Jobs Bill into law in October.

KEPT TAXES LOW FOR CONNECTICUT FAMILIES

Johnson helped pass the **Working Families Tax Relief Act of 2004**, which extended crucial middle-class tax cuts that were first passed in 2001. This law, signed by the President in October, extends the low 10 percent bracket, keeps the child tax credit at \$1,000, continues relief from the marriage tax penalty, and protects more middle-class families from the unfair Alternative Minimum Tax.

As a result of these tax cuts, a family of four earning \$40,000 will enjoy a tax cut of more than \$1,100 a year.

FOUGHT FOR MANUFACTURING WORKERS

During the 108th Congress, **one of Johnson’s top priorities was to help Connecticut manufacturers compete globally and create jobs at home.** She led a coalition of small manufacturers in Connecticut to address challenges facing them and implement solutions.

Johnson convened numerous meetings of Connecticut manufacturers with the Secretary of Commerce, the Undersecretary for International Trade, and other top trade officials to discuss challenges to domestic manufacturing. Johnson secured the input of Connecticut manufacturers in a national Commerce Department study on the future of the industry.

She also **led the charge to repeal the steel tariff**, which cost Connecticut jobs and raised prices for manufacturers. Johnson was the first Member of Congress to testify before the U.S. International Trade Commission calling for the tariff's repeal. She personally urged President Bush to repeal the tariff, which he did in December 2003.

SAFEGUARDED OUR CHILDREN

Johnson successfully passed her bill **giving police officers new tools to protect our children from sex predators**, especially those who stalk their victims on the Internet. **Johnson's cyberstalking legislation** was incorporated into the bill creating a nationwide Amber Alert child protection system, which the President signed into law in April 2003.

PROTECTED OUR ENVIRONMENT

Johnson is a bipartisan leader in protecting our environment. She successfully **protected Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge from oil and gas exploration** in proposed energy legislation. Johnson's bill to designate **the Upper Housatonic River Valley as a National Heritage Area passed the U.S. House**. She also introduced **new legislation to protect the lower Farmington River as a Wild and Scenic Partnership River**.

IMPROVED HEALTH CARE QUALITY THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

Johnson is a leader to improve health care quality and reduce errors by bringing cutting-edge technologies to the service of patients and health care providers. In April 2004, the President issued an Executive Order adopting Johnson's bill, **the National Health Information Infrastructure Act of 2003**, which created the position of a national health information technology officer. This officer, Dr. David Brailer, is coordinating the creation of electronic prescribing systems and health records to improve health care quality, reduce preventable medical errors, eliminate duplicative tests, and drive down the cost of health care.

KEPT OUR PROMISES TO VETERANS

Johnson has fought hard to make sure Connecticut's veterans receive the benefits they have earned. Johnson has strongly supported **a 40 percent increase in veterans health spending** in the last three years and continues to **safeguard Newington's VA Hospital**. This year at Johnson's urging the Hartford claims office was moved to the Newington hospital to better serve veterans and strengthen the facility. Johnson has also cut through bureaucratic red-tape and **secured long-overdue service medals for Connecticut veterans** who earned them but never received them.

TOOK ACTION TO REBUILD OUR CITIES AND NEIGHBORHOODS

Johnson's **brownfields legislation was signed into law** as part of the American Jobs Creation Act in October. The bill provides incentives for non-profit agencies across the nation, which control trillions in capital, to purchase and redevelop brownfields properties – dormant, possibly contaminated factory sites. Greater incentives for brownfields redevelopment will lead to revitalized neighborhoods, more jobs and affordable housing in Connecticut's cities.

DELIVERED \$100 MILLION FOR THE FIFTH DISTRICT

Johnson once again ensured Connecticut received its fair share of federal resources and projects. In the 108th Congress, **Johnson has brought home more than \$100 million in federal funds** for projects that create jobs, improve our schools and hospitals, and help our communities. Among the project funding Johnson secured for the Fifth District:

- \$21.3 million for job-creating defense projects in Danbury and across the District.
- \$1.4 million to improve Waterbury Public Schools.
- \$300,000 to help first-time homebuyers in Meriden.
- \$300,000 in grants for Danbury firefighters.
- \$1.7 million to construct the new water treatment facility in New Britain.
- \$3 million to improve job training in the greater Waterbury area.
- \$700,000 to improve Canaan's senior services center.

IMPROVED OUR COMMUNITIES

Once again, Johnson has worked successfully with constituents and local groups to improve social services and solve local problems. Among Johnson's community accomplishments:

- Worked closely with Connecticut hospitals to address unfair Medicare reimbursements, resulting in **millions of dollars more in fairer payments** for nursing and support staff.
- **Leading coalition to fight casino expansion in Western Connecticut** and to overturn the Bureau of Indian Affairs' incorrect recognition of the Schaghticoke Tribal Nation.
- **Successfully worked with state Department of Transportation to fast-track the construction of a traffic signal** at the dangerous intersection of Climax Road and Route 44 in Avon.
- Worked with Governor Rell to secure **\$2 million in state bond financing for Meriden's downtown redevelopment project**.
- **Worked with IRS to keep Danbury's Taxpayer Assistance Center open**. The center, which helps ordinary taxpayers file their taxes and answer questions, was being considered for a round of closures.
- Worked with advocates for victims of domestic violence and **kept Meriden's Chrysalis center open and running under local control**.
- **Successfully worked with Senator Chris Dodd to persuade the U.S. Postal Service to construct a long-needed 30,000 square-foot post office building** in Meriden.

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