



The Olver Report

U. S. REPRESENTATIVE
JOHN OLVER
FIRST DISTRICT—MASSACHUSETTS

Berkshire, Hampden, Hampshire, Franklin, Worcester & Middlesex Counties



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Friend:

These days, there is no getting away from talk of economic security—the worries of job loss, corporate downsizing, health insurance woes, and at-risk pensions. Be it on a radio talk show, in a local diner, or at a community event, it seems to be the first topic of discussion.

People are anxious about their economic futures. It is not an easy time. They are working longer hours to try to secure the future for their families.

But if you worry about losing your job, health insurance, or pension, it gets harder and harder to secure that future.

A little over a month ago I began a series of public forums throughout the First District designed to get at the heart of such concerns.

During these meetings, I have heard many personal stories, worries, and solutions to the problems you face every day. And I have taken those concerns to Washington, injecting them into the national debate.

Together, we can find the answers to some of these problems. I look forward to joining with you in that search.

Sincerely,



Congressman Olver discusses congressional issues with Athol residents at a recent pancake breakfast. Olver talked with Athol residents about many of the area's concerns, including health care and job security.

Promoting Economic Secur

Government Responsibility

✓ *Balance the budget without reducing federal aid to our schools, without harming the environment, and without dismantling successful efforts in community policing and job training. Most important, we must balance the budget in a manner that benefits all citizens, not just a privileged few.*

✓ *Raise the federal minimum wage. The current minimum wage has not been raised in five years, and its spending value is at a forty-year low. A head of household working 40 hours a week at minimum wage makes less than \$8,900 a year, which is two-thirds of the poverty level. Workers should earn a good day's pay for an honest day's work.*



Congressman Olver discusses recent budget proposals and their effect on Medicare and Medicaid with participants of a recent Councils on Aging legislative breakfast. Congressman Olver has spent most of the 104th Congress fighting to protect health care programs such as Medicare from disastrous budget cuts.

✓ *Provide all Americans with adequate health insurance.*

■ **Pass honest, straightforward health insurance reform.** Health insurance should be portable—allowing individuals to take their coverage with them when they change jobs—and employees must not be dropped from existing plans because of pre-existing conditions.

■ **Provide health insurance for children who are not covered.** Our children should not be victims. We should do everything possible to ensure that all of our children have the health care coverage they need.

ity: What Needs to Be Done

Corporate Responsibility

- ✓ *Provide tax incentives for those corporations that demonstrate a commitment to their employees and to the community. Corporate America should:*
 - Ensure that all employees receive secure health insurance coverage. Employees should not be denied coverage because of a pre-existing condition or corporate downsizing.
 - Make pensions more secure by making them portable so employees can take their pensions with them when they lose or change jobs. A retiree's nest egg should not be lost because of corporate takeovers, downsizings, or management raids on pension funds, but should be secure and guaranteed.
 - Devote a significant portion of corporate earnings to research and development. With the Republican leadership intent on cutting R&D funding, the best way for America to remain technologically ahead of its competitors is through significant investment in research and development by corporations.
 - Invest in their employees by providing on-the-job training. It must be made clear that the only way a business can post long-term success is to make sure that its employees are trained in the technology and skills they will need to compete.
 - Facilitate employee ownership in the company. Across the country, high-paid executives claim they lay off tens of thousands to benefit the stockholders. Ownership should be responsible to its employees and to its stockholders. Stock options for employees would increase the productivity of the worker, with each worker benefiting financially from a strong company.
 - Voluntarily limit the salaries of top executives. In our industrial competitors, such as Germany and Japan, the top executives make 40 to 50 times as much as the lowest paid worker. In the United States, many top executives make more than 200 times as much as the lowest paid employee. Businesses should not be permitted to deduct as a business expense CEO salaries that are over 50 times that of the lowest paid worker.

Congressman Olver meets with Greenfield area residents. Olver has recently helped the Greenfield community obtain the funds to purchase buses for local commuters.



REFORMING WELFARE

I support welfare reform. We must pass effective welfare reform. But for people to build independent lives, they must have access to basic literacy, ongoing education and training, health care, and day care for their children.

Last year, members of Congress from both parties spent a great deal of time working on major welfare reform legislation.

All agreed that we need a new program with strong work requirements, so that every employable person who receives welfare will be required to work.

A split arose because some believed we must make education, job training, health care, and day care available. And some did not.

The bill I helped write last year was defeated by the majority, but I will continue to fight for the ideas contained in the bill:

- ✓ Require able-bodied individuals to find a job, perform community service or register and attend education or job training programs within 30 days of filing for benefits.
- ✓ Require teenage mothers to live with a responsible adult *and* attend school in order to receive assistance.
- ✓ Provide child care so that parents can work without worrying about what to do with their children.
- ✓ Allow states to decide whether additional cash benefits should go to those who have additional children.
- ✓ Establish tougher child support enforcement mechanisms.

My ideas for welfare reform are common-sense, practical changes that can make an immediate difference. By combining strong work requirements with greater state flexibility and a commitment to the education, training, and child care needed to sustain independence, welfare dependence can be greatly curtailed.

Providing Answers for the Citizens of the First District

Whether you have a question about pending legislation, need help applying for federal services, or just want to have your voice heard in Washington, my staff and I will be pleased to hear from you.

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U.S. REPRESENTATIVE

John Olver

*Serving
the
First District
of
Massachusetts*

Congress of the United States
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Washington, D.C. 20515

Official Business



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