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# **JEFFERSON**

#### REPORT

U.S. House of Representatives August, 2004 Washington, D.C. 20515

#### **Working for the Port, Working for You**

Congressman Jefferson led a bipartisan effort in the House of Representatives to pass a bill that included his provision that Louisiana shipping executives and maritime workers are calling "the most significant maritime legislation in decades." The American Jobs Creation Act includes a "tonnage tax" provision, which provides tax benefits for U.S. flag vessel owners who participate in international trade.

"This provision will not only help maintain the shipping industry's international trade activities but it will improve its economic conditions, ultimately providing more jobs for American, and more specifically Louisiana, mariners," Jefferson said.

Currently, there are only 89 privately-owned U.S. flag vessels that participate in international trade, down from the approximately 2,000 ves-

sels that engaged in international trade 50 years ago. This provision will single-handedly reverse this trend and spur greater investments in the U.S. flagship industry, creating greater economic and job opportunities for New Orleans, for Louisiana, and for the United States. It is expected that more ships will be registered under the U.S. flag and at least one line has already guaranteed that they will add ships to their U.S. fleet. The tonnage tax regime will benefit New Orleans-based companies such as Central Gulf Lines, Inc., Waterman Steamship Corporation, and other American maritime companies headquartered in New Orleans engaging in international trade by preserving and enhancing maritime employment opportunities for United States seafarers from Louisiana and elsewhere around the country.

A recent economic impact study for the Port of New Orleans shows that the maritime industry provides over \$2 billion in economic benefits and supports more than 100,000 jobs in and around the greater New Orleans region. The tonnage tax is expected to provide additional employment for thousands of U.S. mariners and shore-side staff in Louisiana and elsewhere around the country.

The bill must be approved by both houses of Congress in the conference process, which is designed to reconcile House and Senate versions of bills. Once that is complete, the bill will head to the White House for the President's signature.

"Times will be changing for our New Orleansbased mariners and the "tonnage tax" provision is going to make that happen," he said. ■

#### **Jefferson Leads the Charge for Medicare Reform**

Congressman Jefferson is leading the fight for legislation to modernize the Medicare End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Program. End-stage renal disease causes kidney failure and without dialysis or kidney transplantation, it can be fatal.

"Chronic kidney failure is prevalent in poorer communities, and we should all take a closer look at providing adequate healthcare options for people suffering from it," Jefferson said. "I am happy to lead the effort to modernize our healthcare system so that it works properly for those suffering from this condition and so we can educate Americans, especially those who suffer from this condition at a disproportionate rate, to change the current rising population of kidney failure sufferers."

The ESRD Modernization Act will assist dialysis patients by providing support for education programs to help them make more informed decisions about treatment options and learn self-management skills important to improving their quality of life. It also looks to stabilize the economics of the ESRD program and create incentives to improving the quality of care that patients receive. Most

importantly, it provides an annual Medicare update framework for the composite rate — an update mechanism that would allow payment rates to keep pace with technology and cost changes. Seventy-five percent of all dialysis patients nationwide are Medicare patients. Dialysis care is the only health sector that does not receive an annual payment adjustment through Medicare.

"It's important that Medicare is able to provide the best possible care for those in need," he said. "We will continue to fight to make sure that Congress takes action as soon as possible to ensure that these patients are able to receive adequate services through Medicare."

Last month, Jefferson toured a DaVita dialysis facility in Algiers and offered his support to its patients, who go through essential and life-threatening procedures 3 days a week, 4 hours each day. The clinic, one of 7 located in the his district, is a valuable asset to its 50 plus patients living with chronic kidney failure and depending on dialysis to sustain their lives.

About 300,000 Americans rely on dialysis to

support their kidney function. Twenty million Americans live with chronic kidney disease and an additional 20 million are at increased risk due to diabetes and high blood pressure. African-Americans are 1.6 times more likely to have diabetes than Whites and therefore, African-Americans make up 1/3 of the ESRD population.



Jefferson visits dialysis patients at the DaVita Dialysis Center in Algiers to discuss Medicare reform.

# Jefferson Delivers National Radio Address in Support of Stem Cell Research

Congressman Jefferson delivered the Congressional Black Caucus weekly "Message to America," which airs on all National Urban Radio affiliate stations.

While advocating support of reversing the ban on funding of new stem cell lines, he said that continued research of stem cell use could directly benefit the African-American community's health.

"African-Americans are 1.6 times more likely to have diabetes than Whites; African-Americans are at greater risk for cardiovascular disease than Whites..." Jefferson said. "These diseases are killing African-Americans in record numbers. With new technology, expanded adult stem cells, instead of normal adult cells, could prove to be just as productive as embryonic cells and

could regenerate new pancreatic cells for diabetes patients and heart cells for heart disease patients."

He said America should be the leader in biomedical research and development, "not for pride's sake but for people's sake." He said we must act urgently to change the health prospects of all America's people.

#### Jefferson Supports National Finance Center Employees

Jefferson hailed the work of the NFC and that of its hardworking employees in Congressional hearings in Washington, D.C. and at events in the New Orleans area and addressed the employees' concerns about possible job losses at the center.

"Since last summer, when the NFC first unjustly came under attack due to faulty technology, I have been aggressively working with the officials at the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board and the Thrift Savings Plan to secure the credibility of the NFC and its employees as well as their jobs," Jefferson said in his written statements and committee testimony. "I will continue to vigorously resolve these inconsistencies and fight for your jobs as well as the well being of the NFC."

Jefferson met with Thrifty Savings Plan Executive Director Gary Amelio, who assured him that there would not be any positions eliminated that could not be absorbed. He also said that he would ask Amelio to visit the center again and meet local and state officials so that he could get a better feel of the community commitment to the employees and the efficiency of the center and support of the Thrift Savings Plan.

# Jefferson Parish/ Westbank Congressional Office Now Open

Jefferson Parish General Government Building Suite 3200 200 Derbigny Street Gretna, Louisiana 70053 Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.- 5 p.m. (504) 368-7019



Congressman Jefferson pictured (from left to right) with International Longshoreman Association President James O. Campbell and New Orleans Cold Storage Dockside Marketing Vice President Mark Blanchard. He visited the Port's Jordan Terminal to discuss the benefits of the "tonnage tax" provision for New Orleans-based shipping. He also talked to workers who were preparing ships for international poultry export.

# Jefferson Joins HUD in Announcing Community Development Grant for SUNO

Congressman Jefferson joined U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Deputy Secretary Alphonso Jackson to announce that Southern University of New Orleans (SUNO) will receive \$550,000 to revitalize the Bienville Corridor and its Catchment Area.

"Community development is essential to the future of our great city and it is fitting that our future leaders work as key players in the effort to revitalize and shape our neighborhoods," Jefferson said. "This grant is valuable to our area because it will help us meet critical needs such as blighted housing and infrastructure improvements, among other things. And, this will lend to community reinvestment and overall stabilization of the neighborhood."

SUNO was selected as one of 14 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) to be awarded a grant which is designed to help schools stimulate local community and economic development. The HBCU program funds grantees to carry out projects designed primarily to benefit low and moderate-income residents or meet urgent community development needs. The grants can be used for activities such as: acquiring real estate; demolition; homeownership assistance to low- and moderate-income persons; special economic development activities; and rehabilitation of residential, commercial or industrial buildings to correct code violations.

The grant awarded to SUNO will be matched with funds by the State of Louisiana Economic Development Department which will bring the total close to \$1,000,000. ■

## Jefferson Champions Identity Theft Prevention with N.O. Senior Citizens

Congressman Jefferson held a briefing with senior citizens at the Central City Senior Center on Jackson Avenue and invited representatives from the U.S. Postal Service and the Federal Trade Commission to discuss a consumer education initiative to prevent citizens from becoming victims of identity theft and raise awareness of America's fastest growing crime.

Identity theft involves acquiring key pieces of someone's personal identifying information in order to impersonate them. The information enables the identity thief to commit numerous forms of fraud, which include taking over the victim's financial accounts; opening new bank accounts; purchasing homes and automobiles; and applying for loans, credit cards and social security benefits.

Last year, 9.9 million Americans were victims of identity theft, a crime that cost them roughly \$5 billion. Last year, Louisiana reported more than 1,300 complaints. If you have an identity theft complaint, please contact the U.S. Postal Service Office of the Inspector General by calling 1-888-USPS-OIG (1-888-877-7644). ■

## Ryan-Jefferson Bill will Create Jobs and Boost Home Buying

In an economic study of the Ryan-Jefferson Mortgage Insurance Bill, H.R. 1336, which would make mortgage insurance tax deductible, economist John Tuccillo, Ph D., asserts specifically that home-buying will surge by an estimated 300,000 purchases each year, creating between 150,000 and 250,000 new U.S. jobs, specifically in the home building sector. U.S. Representatives Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) and William Jefferson introduced the bill last year. The Financial Services Roundtable released the study, which was also endorsed by the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America.



Jefferson announcing the launch of the With Ownership Wealth (WOW) Homeownership Program in New Orleans. Behind him are U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Deputy Secretary Alfonso Jackson, Mayor C. Ray Nagin and other local leaders. The WOW Program tries to connect potential home-buyers with home financing opportunities.

"We are very pleased that so many of our colleagues have joined in support of this legislation," said Congressman Jefferson. "With the release of this insightful and credible report, I believe that they will be encouraged to maintain this effort to help more American families achieve the American dream of homeownership. This report supports our belief that this legislation will help ensure that the momentum in home buying is sustained."

Government and private mortgage insurance programs help first-time, low-income and veteran borrowers afford to purchase a home. The VA, FHA, RHA and PMI programs allow buyers to make a down payment of 3 percent or less of the appraised value. Mortgage insurance is a critical factor in allowing middle-income families and minorities to become homeowners.

In 2001, nationwide, mortgage insurance covered 57 percent of mortgage purchase loans made to African American and Hispanic borrowers and 54 percent of the loans to borrowers with incomes below the median income. Twelve million American families presently use mortgage insurance.



**Taking Care of Louisiana's Interests** 

Each day
Congress is
in session in
Washington,
I work for the
best interests
of the people
of the 2<sup>nd</sup>

Congressional district and for Louisiana. I fight for our ports, our workers, our businesses – for our quality of life.

Every year, as Congress prepares the budget for the next fiscal year, I urge my colleagues on the Appropriations Committee to include projects for my district. I work for Louisiana's fair share of federal funds – from research projects at local universities to hurricane and flood protection projects.

This year, we have been very successful in garnering support for fiscal year 2005 projects for our district, including the following:

The Defense appropriations bill, passed in June, provided \$2 million for an integrated bioenvironmental hazards research program – a research collaboration between the Office of Naval Research, the Naval Oceanographic Office, and the Center for Bioenvironmental Research at Tulane and Xavier Universities. The research program is designed to successfully develop technology that will enable bio-terrorism agents to be monitored in reservoirs, and through a watershed; harbors and coastal waters, like those in and around New Orleans, to be monitored for bio-terrorism agents; and will enable chemical concentrations to be rapidly mapped, tracked, and their sources quickly located.

The Defense bill also included \$1 million for a Center for Foreign Language Study at Dillard University. The Center will house the programs and infrastructure needed to graduate African-American students who can provide necessary language and foreign studies expertise for the U.S. military, intelligence agencies, diplomatic corps, international business concerns, non-governmental organizations and public health agencies.

The Energy and Water Appropriations bill provided some much needed funds for

hurricane protection and coastal restoration projects in and around the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional district. The Louisiana Coastal Area Ecosystem Restoration project will receive \$8 million in the 2005 fiscal year; Lake Pontchartrain hurricane protection project will receive \$7.5 million; Larose to Golden Meadow, LA will receive \$583,000; New Orleans to Venice, LA will receive over \$2.9 million; Southeast Louisiana (SELA) drainage project will receive \$35 million; and the Westbank hurricane protection project will receive \$37 million.

Another important request was for the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal Lock project — which will receive \$20 million next year - \$10 million more than the President's budget requested. The project will allow the New Orleans District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to proceed on schedule to complete vital hurricane and flood protection projects in our area.

In the Department of Transportation Authorization bill, we were extremely successful in getting funding for our road and transportation efforts. The House approved \$2.5 million to widen the strip from LA 18 Northrup Grumman/Avondale Shipyards to US 90 in Jefferson Parish to four lanes; \$3 million to plan and construct pedestrian/bicycle crossings of the Washington-Palmetto Canal at Xavier University; \$500,000 to replace the Almonaster Bridge in New Orleans; \$300,000 to develop a master transportation plan for the New Orleans Regional Medical Center; \$1 million to plan and construct New Orleans Union Passenger Terminal inter-modal



facilities; \$2.5 million to conduct a multimodal corridor study from Louis Armstrong International Airport to the Central Business District; \$200,000 to upgrade highwayrail crossings at Madison Street in Gretna; \$500,000 to construct a Mississippi River Trail and Bikepath in New Orleans; and \$3.5 million to widen and improve LaPalco Boulevard from Bayou Segnette to US 90 in Jefferson Parish, among other key provisions.

All of these projects are important to New Orleans and the metro area, important to the 2<sup>nd</sup> district, and in the best interest of Louisiana.

I will continue to fight for Louisiana's interests as the House moves to pass appropriations bills for the other federal government agencies.

Congressman William Jefferson 240 Cannon HOB Wasbington, D.C. 20515 Official Business

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