



Washington Watch

44TH DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA • WINTER 2007
REPRESENTATIVE KEN CALVERT

Dear Students:

I hope all of you enjoyed a safe and happy holiday season. No doubt many of you are anxious to embark on the last months of your 2007 school year and for those of you graduating in June, this is a very exciting time. Throughout your education, teachers have passed along knowledge that will be instrumental in your future, whether it is in college, the military, family life, volunteerism, or in the workforce. That next step can be intimidating, but I assure you that the future is bright.

Over the past few years, the economy has experienced steady growth and low unemployment. As our economy continues to grow it is important to note that America and California are the leaders in technology, science, medicine and engineering. Our economy and future labor needs center around an educated workforce who will continue America’s leadership in the high-tech sector. Unfortunately scores in math and science have been declining as well as interest in these subjects. I am hopeful that as you consider what to take as electives in high school or major in at college you will keep yourselves open to the possibility of a career in a high-tech field. Our country needs your talent and expertise. You will play an instrumental role in maintaining the prosperity of America’s economy and our country’s position in the world.

One of the many perks as a student are the several federal holidays that allow you a long three-day weekend to relax, spend time with family and friends, and (hopefully) study. However it is vital that all Americans remember the significance of all federal holidays. This issue of the Student Newsletter details the ten federal holidays, which are legally applicable only to federal employees and the District of Columbia. Neither Congress nor the President has asserted the authority to declare a “national holiday” which would be binding on the 50 states, although the federal holidays established are recognized and largely observed in all 50 states. In addition, this issue explains the reason and history behind each holiday.

I hope you will find the issue enlightening and I welcome any input you may have. Please feel free to contact me through my website or at any of the locations below. Again, good luck on your final months of the school year – they will be memorable ones!

Sincerely,

Ken Calvert

Contact Congressman Ken Calvert at www.house.gov/calvert or at one of the following addresses:

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The Ten Federally Recognized Holidays

New Year's Day

January 1

The tradition of commemorating the first day of a new year is honored around the world. For many cultures, including the United States, this day falls on January 1 on the Gregorian calendar. Congress in 1870 established the first day of January as a federal holiday in Washington, DC.

Birthday of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Third Monday in January

Martin Luther King, Jr. was born January 15, 1929. Dr. King's legacy is one of peace, understanding, equality and brotherhood. During his time he peacefully advocated individual responsibility, respect and dignity regardless of race, religion, or income. Dr. King was assassinated on April 4, 1968 and in 1983 a federal holiday was created in his honor.

Washington's Birthday

Third Monday in February

Unofficially this holiday is also referred to as Presidents' Day as both George Washington's and Abraham Lincoln's birthdays are in February. This day honors our first President, George Washington, who also served as the General of the American forces during the American Revolution.

Memorial Day

Last Monday in May

Originally called "Decoration Day," Memorial Day dates back to after the Civil War when mourners decorated the graves of the war dead. This day was formally established in 1888 to honor all those who gave their lives in defense of the United States. It is important to remember the difference between Memorial Day and Veterans Day; Memorial Day specifically honors those who died fighting for the United States. Veterans Day honors all those who served in the U.S. military, both the living and the dead.

Independence Day

July 4

Also known as America's Birthday, the Fourth of July marks the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. Even prior to this date, however, the 13 American colonies had voiced grievances against Great Britain and engaged in battles at Lexington and Concord in 1775. This date marks the formal war declaration by the American colonies and the beginning of the American Revolution, which ended in 1783.



CONGRESSMAN CALVERT speaks at a Veterans Day event in the district and meets with local veterans.

Labor Day

First Monday in September

Labor Day is aptly named since it is dedicated to the American worker. The first Labor Day was celebrated in New York City on September 5, 1882. For many years Labor Day was not only to commemorate the American worker but also a day for workers to air grievances. Labor Day was designated a federal holiday in 1894.

Columbus Day

Second Monday in October

On October 12, 1492, Christopher Columbus landed on what is now the British Bahamas and his landing is considered the official discovery of the "New World." Columbus believed he found a new route to India when in fact his landing led to the further discovery of North and South America. President Franklin Roosevelt proclaimed Columbus Day a federal holiday in 1937.

Veterans Day

November 11

November 11 was called "Armistice Day" by President Wilson during World War I when hostilities ended on "the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month." In 1938, Congress declared Armistice Day to be a federal holiday. After World War II and the Korean War, November 11 was designated Veterans Day. This day honors all the brave men and women, living and dead, who have served and sacrificed for the United States of America.

Thanksgiving

Fourth Thursday in November

President George Washington issued the first proclamation calling for a day of Thanksgiving in 1789. The tradition was sporadically followed until President Lincoln proclaimed the last Thursday of November as a day of Thanksgiving. In 1939 President Roosevelt moved Thanksgiving back a week in order to allow for a longer holiday shopping period. In 1941, he admitted the failure of the move and signed a bill from Congress establishing the last Thursday of the month as a federal holiday. The holiday commemorates the Pilgrims feast after the first Harvest in America.

Christmas Day

December 25

Congress enacted Christmas Day as a federal holiday in 1870. While the day reflects the Christian celebration of the birth Jesus Christ, it is also a time of year set aside to commemorate several religious and cultural holidays.