



# CARTER COURIER

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APRIL 18, 2008

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 5

## LETTER FROM THE CONGRESSMAN

Dear Friends,

In the past weeks I have had the opportunity to address key issues that our nation is currently facing. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to travel to Colombia with U.S. Trade Representative Susan Schwab and other members of Congress to discuss trade issues. I can tell you after witnessing the progress in Colombia that it is critical we pass the Colombia Free Trade Agreement.

Next week in Congress we will be debating H.R. 5819, a bill to improve the Small Business Innovation Research Program and the Small Business Technology Transfer Program. We will also debate H.R. 2830, the Coast Guard Authorization Bill that will authorize appropriations for FY 2008.

As always, I thank all of you in the 31st District for the opportunity to serve you in Congress. I look forward to advancing the conservative principles that make Central Texas so great.

Until next week,



## BORDER SECURITY SHOULD BE A PRIORITY

Securing our borders is the backbone of our national security, and something I have dedicated my years in Congress to protecting. Unfortunately there are those in Congress who don't seem to think it is a priority.

Porous borders pose a grave threat to the security of America, and to the economic stability of cities and towns, especially in Texas. Concerned members from both parties, including myself, believe this issue demands action now and should not wait for a new president or a new decade. Unfortunately Nancy Pelosi has stopped legislation that I have co-sponsored that would protect our borders from coming to the House floor for a vote and being signed into law. To that end, Representative Thelma Drake has filed a discharge petition to force a vote on H.R. 4008, the SAVE Act. This bipartisan bill would address the security loopholes in our borders. If 218 Members sign the petition, Democrat leaders will be forced to hold a vote on this bill.

The SAVE Act, which is sponsored by Representative Heath Shuler, a Democrat, has 145 co-sponsors, including myself and 48 of my Democrat colleagues. The bill provides for a number of things that will drastically improve the security of our borders including:

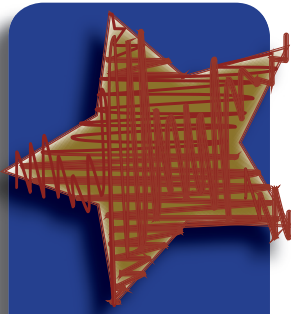
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- An increase in border patrol agents by 8,000 over the next five years; and additional 1,150 ICE agents, 140 Criminal Alien Program officers, and 250 state and local law enforcement for immigration support.
- Strengthening of alien smuggling penalties.
- Expedited removal of and increased detention facilities for illegal aliens.
- Authority for additional border infrastructure and aerial vehicles/surveillance equipment.
- Strengthened Employer Enforcement: (1) mandates usage of the E-Verify system which allows employers to make an efficient and accurate check of a hire's employment eligibility; (2) requires employer/employee notification of Social Security number mismatches and multiple users; (3) requires establishment of electronic birth and death registration databases; (4) penalizes specified employers for failure to correct information returns; and (5) prohibits employers from deducting from gross income wages paid to unauthorized aliens.

Not only does this bill help to strengthen our borders immediately, but it is a good step towards reforming our immigration process. Last year, I introduced the Secure America for Everyone (SAFE) Act which consists of four straightforward bills addressing law enforcement, border security, and a secure ID system, ultimately leading to a practical immigration process that will make it easier to come into this country legally and harder to come illegally. Our country was founded on the principles of freedom and opportunity for all citizens, and I stand ready to work with my colleagues to create a system that makes sense.

Securing our borders should be at the heart of our national security strategy. Although we are in an era where common sense legislation too often gets caught up in partisan gridlock, this is not an issue we can afford to delay on any further. The American people have called on Congress repeatedly to act to secure our borders, and the Democratic Leadership should listen to them.

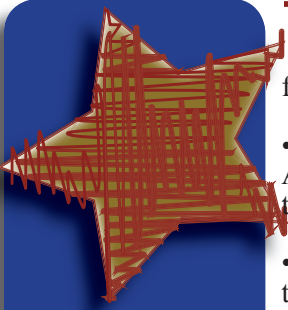
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### **REPUBLICAN LEADERS UNVEIL PRINCIPLES FOR HOUSING LEGISLATION**

This week, House Republicans unveiled principles for bipartisan housing legislation. Congress must work together to address the housing crisis and possible solutions to tackle the economic concerns of middle-class American families. One thing is certain: raising taxes on the back of an uncertain economy is irresponsible and will only add to the problem.

These clear, responsible and balanced principles should guide this debate, and I hope Democrats will agree to work together to craft legislation that can become law with bipartisan support. I, along with other Members of the House Republican leadership team unveiled the following principles for bipartisan housing legislation:

- **Support Homeownership.** Homeownership is central to the American dream and a key part of our free economy. We need to keep the dream of homeownership within reach of middle-class families.
- **Jump Start the Housing Market.** The best way out of the housing crisis to get Americans purchasing homes again. The housing market needs a jump-start, not a bail-out.
- **Lower Taxes on Middle-Class Families.** Lower taxes on middle-class families will help increase homeownership. We cannot tax our way to a housing recovery, and higher taxes on American families will only add to the middle-class squeeze.
- **Help Needy Homeowners Who are Truly Victims.** We must address the threat to our economy and help needy homeowners who are truly victims without a taxpayer bailout that rewards reckless behavior.
- **Reform and Transparency.** We must bring reform and transparency to the housing market and improve our overall economy, as well as ensure that this situation doesn't become a



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feeding frenzy of trial lawyers eager to profit from people's misfortune.

- **Fairness for Responsible Homeowners.** As a matter of fairness, we should stand up for Americans who saved and invested responsibly, not reward reckless behavior at the expense of those who did the right thing.
- **Protection for Taxpayers.** We should protect taxpayers from having to bail out speculators and scam artists.
- **Stake in the Outcome.** Anyone receiving government assistance should have to make a financial sacrifice and have a stake in the outcome.

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### **PETRAEUS/CROCKER REPORT**

General David Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker delivered testimony to the House Armed Services and Foreign Affairs Committee on the status of our troops' progress in Iraq.

General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker gave a very honest and clear assessment of the situation on the ground in Iraq. There is no doubt that Iraq is safer and more stable than it was a year ago, and we have our soldiers to thank for this undeniable success.

As the Representative for Fort Hood, the largest military base in the nation, I have the privilege of meeting with our soldiers both at home and on the ground in Iraq. I can tell you that they believe strongly in their mission and the success they are achieving. Violence in Iraq is down, and I have witnessed first-hand our American soldiers working with Iraqi forces to bring their country to a more secure state. Political reconciliation is coming along slowly, but it is happening. The Iraqi government has met 12 of the 18 benchmarks, while continuing to make progress on the remainder of them.

We must realize that the stability of Iraq is fragile and attempt to pull out our troops prematurely will only devastate the progress being made in the region, putting the security of our country in grave danger. General Petraeus is a man of integrity and we owe it to him and our troops the serious consideration of this report. We also need to send our men and women in uniform the funds and resources they need to be both safe and successful.

It is clear we have a choice to make here in Washington. We can surrender our success, or we can put our political battles aside, work together to give our troops what they need to succeed, and bring them home under the American flag, not the white flag of defeat.

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### **CEDAR PARK FIRE DEPARTMENT RECEIVES GRANT AWARD**

I was proud to announce that the Cedar Park Fire Department has received an \$18,856 grant for fire prevention education programs. The funding was awarded through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) program.

These federal funds will be critical to provide fire prevention education programs in Cedar Park. I thank the Cedar Park firefighters for their tireless efforts to protect the residents of Cedar Park, and hope this \$18,856 grant will allow them to better fulfill the fire protection needs of the community.

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