

Congressman
Paul E. Kanjorski

Report to the 11th District

January 2004



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Dear Friends:

As we begin the fourth year of the 21st century, I am filled with more hope for the future of Northeastern Pennsylvania than at any other time of my life. We are learning to work together more regionally, our key geographic location and excellent workforce are attracting new higher value companies, and we have come to recognize the importance of maintaining our high quality of life through better planning and environmental protection.

Transportation improvements continue to be a primary goal for expanding economic opportunities for our region. Improving the exits on I-80 in Monroe County, completing the South Valley Parkway in the Nanticoke area, and replacing the Jim Thorpe bridge are among the many highway projects I have supported with additional federal dollars. Construction has begun on a new terminal that is the keystone of a **\$62 million renovation project for the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport**. Within the next few months a study will be completed to determine the feasibility of building a **cargo and maintenance airport** in southern Luzerne County. The engineering and design plans to restore **passenger rail service between Scranton and New York City** should be finalized later this year, and construction could be completed as early as 2007.

Our region's proximity to New York City has attracted attention from major financial services companies which need to create back-up facilities to maintain operations essential to the world's capital markets in the event of a catastrophic event in metropolitan New York. Over many years of service on the Financial Services Committee, I have worked closely with financial industry leaders, and I am enjoying the opportunity to turn the tables and persuade them of the assets of our region.

However, **we still face significant challenges in strengthening our national economy, protecting our citizens from terrorism, and ensuring quality health care** for those among us who are most vulnerable, especially the elderly. Washington has become even more divided by partisanship, and I have been deeply disappointed by the failure of our national leadership to seek consensus in addressing our most critical issues. For example, not a single Democratic Member of the House of Representatives was included in the final negotiations on the bill to restructure Medicare which ultimately passed the House with almost exclusively Republican support.

Although our nation remains divided over many aspects of the war in Iraq, being at war reminds us all of the tremendous sacrifices made by our military men and women and their families. It is more important than ever that we keep our commitment to those who defend our freedom by providing them with support when they are on duty and later when they are veterans. Locally, one measure of support is **preserving the Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center**, and I was proud of the 30,000 residents who signed petitions I hand-delivered to the VA Secretary in March urging him not to include Wilkes-Barre in the list of VA hospitals scheduled to be closed.

It is my hope that the greatest lesson we can learn from the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 is that we are strongest as a nation when we are united with a common purpose. Hopefully 2004 will be a year in which we find greater unity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul E. Kanjorski". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Paul E. Kanjorski
Member of Congress

Will NEPA Become “Wall Street West”?

In addition to inflicting a horrendous human tragedy, the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York caused a major disruption in the financial transactions of our capital markets which are the foundation of the U.S. and world economy. This past spring, federal regulatory agencies issued guidelines to ensure the continuity of operations for leading financial services firms in the event of a wide-scale catastrophe in metropolitan New York.

As a senior member of the Financial Services Committee, Congressman Kanjorski participated in several hearings on this important issue. As he learned about the need for these firms to establish emergency business continuity facilities, it struck him that Northeastern Pennsylvania was ideally suited to provide a solution. A remote facility should be more than 50 miles from its primary Manhattan-based partner, within a different watershed, and on a different electrical grid. Additionally, current telecommunications technology requires the remote facility to be within 125 miles of its primary partner in order to have simultaneous transference of data.

Unlike back office operations, business continuity facilities would employ a full spectrum of employees to be able to restore full operations within hours of an emergency. One firm estimated that it would move up to 5000 of its employees into a remote facility, with salaries ranging from \$35,000 to as much as \$200,000 per year.

Congressman Kanjorski called together the economic development organizations of Northeastern Pennsylvania to form a task force headed by the regional marketing organization Penn’s Northeast, with assistance from the Great Valley Technology Initiative. This task force prepared a white paper which Con-



Congressman Kanjorski opens the New York Stock Exchange with Chief Operating Officers Robert Britz and Catherine Kinney on November 12, 2003. The Dow Jones industrial average went up over 100 points that day.

gressman Kanjorski presented to more than 100 financial services companies in early August. Just a week later, New York experienced a black-out which did not affect Northeastern Pennsylvania, further emphasizing the suitability of the region.

The task force faces several challenges in this long-term effort. Most critical is ensuring high quality fiber optic lines between New York and Northeastern Pennsylvania. Local provider Commonwealth Telephone and other companies have provided invaluable assistance as the task force continues to meet with prospective firms and fulfill each company’s particular needs. The complete white paper is available on-line at www.house.gov/kanjorski, or you can contact Congressman Kanjorski’s office for a paper copy.

Fighting for Veterans



Save the Wilkes-Barre VA – Congressman Kanjorski testifies in support of the Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center at a hearing held by the VA CARES Commission . The CARES Commission will recommend a number of VA facilities for closure in coming months. A group of fifty veterans joined Congressman Kanjorski in Coatesville, PA to emphasize the importance of the hospital to the 212,000 veterans it serves.

ATTENTION WWII Generation!

The National World War II Memorial will be dedicated on the National Mall in Washington, DC on

Saturday, May 29th, 2004

with a Salute to WWII Veterans on
May 28th and 29th
at the MCI Center

Tickets are **free** and available online at
www.house.gov/kanjorski

or **1-800-222-2346**

on a **first come first served** basis.

Act now if you plan to attend this historic event!

WORKING FOR YOU

Resources for Military Families Available

Congressman Kanjorski is just a phone call away for families with questions or concerns about their loved ones serving in our armed forces. A list of resources is included on Congressman Kanjorski's web site. Bloomsburg residents Rosemary and Walter Brasch are the editors of a newsletter specifically for military families in Northeastern Pennsylvania. You may read it on-line at www.house.gov/kanjorski or call Congressman Kanjorski's office to receive a printed version.



Leonard Olsovsky of Lansford watches as his son, Senior Master Sgt. Michael P. Olsovsky, presents Congressman Paul E. Kanjorski with a flag that Sgt. Olsovsky flew on his final combat mission over Afghanistan.

Expanding Consumer Access, Combatting Identity Theft

Congressman Kanjorski helped lead the effort to pass the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act as the most senior Democrat on the Financial Services Capital Markets Subcommittee. The legislation would continue to drive down the cost of and expand access to credit for consumers. It will also improve protection for consumers, in particular by dealing with the growing problem of identity theft.

A recent report found that over 27 million Americans have been victims of identity theft in the last five years. It is the fastest growing white-collar crime in America. This bill is designed to combat identity theft and aid consumers who are affected by it.

The bill also improves the accuracy of and correction process for credit reports and establishes strong privacy protection for consumers' sensitive medical information.

Small Business Assistance Guide Available

Congressman Kanjorski has prepared a booklet outlining federal and other resources which are available for small businesses in Northeastern Pennsylvania. Topics include sources of loans and grants, information about selling products or services to the federal government, and guidance on federal tax incentives. Call (570) 825-2200 or 1-800-222-2346 to obtain a copy of the Small Business Assistance Guide. It is also available on-line at www.house.gov/kanjorski

Local First Responders Get Federal Help

Firefighters not only save lives and buildings from fires, but also serve as our first line of defense against terrorist attacks. Congressman Kanjorski has been a leader in supporting federal grants through the Firefighter Investment and Response Enhancement (FIRE) program, which has brought more than \$4.3 million to the five counties of the 11th Congressional District over the last two years.

An independent task force, led by former Republican Senator Warren Rudman, recently issued a report entitled "Emergency Responders: Drastically Underfunded, Dangerously Unprepared." According to the report, our nation's fire and police departments on average are severely under equipped with the tools they need to respond to a terrorist attack.

Members of volunteer and professional fire companies can learn more about applying for FIRE grants by contacting Congressman Kanjorski's office at (570) 825-2200 or (800) 222-2346 or by accessing FEMA's web site at www.usfa.fema.gov.



Airport Terminal Construction Begins

Pictured above, Congressman Kanjorski joins hands with former Congressman Joseph McDade and Airport Manager Barry Centini as they prepare for the groundbreaking for the Joseph McDade Terminal Building at the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport. Congressman Kanjorski recently called the overall \$62 million airport expansion project "a key piece of the puzzle in a successful economic future for Northeastern Pennsylvania."

Medicare Plan Too Complex, Unfair to Seniors

"I have been working for years to establish affordable, guaranteed prescription drug coverage under Medicare for senior citizens," said Congressman Paul E. Kanjorski. "However, I could not support the severe restructuring of Medicare recently passed by Congress and signed by the President. This new law undermines fundamental principles of Medicare and will funnel billions of dollars to private HMOs and pharmaceutical companies. Unless we enact major corrections, I fear that this bill will lead to the end of Medicare as a reliable benefit for Americans."

Among the controversial provisions of the new law:

- **Coverage through Private Sector** – Prescription drugs will be available only through private, profit-making health insurance companies who will receive subsidies from the government.
- **Leaves huge coverage gap** – Seniors will pay an annual \$250 deductible, monthly premiums which will cost at least \$35 per month, and a 25 percent co-payment for the first \$2,250 of drug costs. Once a senior's yearly drug costs exceed \$2,250, the new program provides no benefits until the costs exceed \$5,100.
- **Does not reduce drug costs** – The law prevents Medicare administrators from negotiating with drug companies to get a better deal, the way the Canadian health system has been able to do. The law also does not allow the reimportation of lower cost drugs from Canada.
- **Retirees may lose employer - paid benefits** – Experts estimate that approximately 3 million retirees will find their employer-paid benefits cancelled.
- **Unfair to seniors in rural areas** – The failed Medicare+Choice experiment proved that private insurers will not offer coverage in unprofitable rural areas like Northeastern Pennsylvania. This plan does not have an adequate provision to ensure that rural seniors are not abandoned.

Want to Know More about Key Issues?

Check here if you are interested in receiving updates from Congressman Kanjorski. _____
e-mail address: _____

Address: _____

Mail this coupon back to:

Congressman Paul E. Kanjorski
7 N. Wilkes-Barre Blvd., Suite 400M
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702

I am interested in the following key issues:

- ___ Protecting and preserving Social Security
- ___ Providing guaranteed, affordable prescription drug coverage to senior citizens
- ___ Reducing our record budget deficit
- ___ Protecting and restoring our environment
- ___ Honoring our veterans
- ___ Improving education
- ___ Securing our Homeland
- ___ Other: _____

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Resident
11th Congressional District
PENNSYLVANIA

