

# PATTY MURRAY'S WASHINGTON VIEW

U.S. Senator Patty Murray's Weekly Report to the People of Washington – March 3, 2006

## Port Deal Highlights Need for Security Improvements

The national debate over the pending takeover of six U.S. port terminals by Dubai Ports World has highlighted the critical importance of port security to our national security. Those of us in the Pacific Northwest – where our ports are the lifeline of our economy and our communities – have known this for a long time. I support a thorough review of the outsourcing of the ownership of our ports to Dubai Ports world, but what's more troubling is that this process fits a long-standing pattern by the White House of failing to safeguard our ports and trade infrastructure.

For years we've know that our ports are vulnerable, and even the 9/11 Commission identified them as a possible target for terrorists. But for too long, I have had to fight the Administration on issues of cargo and port security. At one hearing in February 2004, then Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge said we should leave port security funding to private port operators – companies like Dubai Ports World. And on Tuesday, when I questioned current Homeland Security Chief Michael Chertoff about security at our nation's seaports at a hearing of the Senate Homeland Security Appropriations subcommittee, I was once again told that private industry needs to pay for security improvements at our ports.

These assertions by the Homeland Security Secretary are in direct contrast to the President's comments last week that we don't have to worry because our Coast Guard and Customs officials are in charge of port security. We need comprehensive reform and improvement so that there is no question that our ports are secure no matter who is in charge.

That's exactly what Senator Susan Collins (R-Maine) and I propose to do with our comprehensive cargo security legislation. To protect our nation we have developed the GreenLane Maritime Cargo Security Act that closes vulnerabilities, provides a way to resume trade if an incident does occur and maintains the efficient flow of commerce.

### The bill improves security by establishing:

- The GreenLane, comprised of supply chain participants who voluntarily meet the highest level of security, allows our security services to better identify and respond to potential threats and provides real incentives to importers to enhance their supply chain security measures.
- Minimum security standards for all cargo containers entering the U.S. and requirements that strengthen current cargo security programs.
- The Office of Cargo Security Policy to ensure accountability and coordination of cargo security policies, procedures & regulations at the Department of Homeland Security and with other agencies.
- Joint Operations Centers to ensure a coordinated, measured response and the resumption and flow of commerce in the event of an incident or heightened national security threat level.
- The Act also Authorizes Port Security Grants, the Container Security Initiative and C-TPAT.

For more on GreenLane:

<http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=252001>

## Efforts Pay Off for Puget Sound

I applaud Senator Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) for his reasonable decision to withdraw a proposal to increase tanker traffic in the fragile Puget Sound. This is a welcome development that will help protect Washington state's pristine environment. Led by the efforts of Senator Maria Cantwell, this outcome is the result of the hard work and dedication of many in our Congressional delegation. I look forward to continuing our work to protect the quality of life Washington state residents hold dear.

## Patriot Act: We Must Protect Both Our Security and Our Civil Liberties

This week, the Senate debated whether to extend 17 controversial provisions of the USA Patriot Act. Because the bill did not include common-sense protections to safeguard our civil liberties, I voted against extending those 17 provisions.

Despite my vote, the bill passed the Senate this week. [The vast majority of the Patriot Act was already permanent law and was unaffected by this week's vote. Yesterday's vote only concerned extending the 17 most controversial provisions.]

I know the Senate can do better and pass a more balanced bill that protects both our security and our civil liberties. That's exactly what the Senate did on a bipartisan basis in July. Unfortunately, that effective, balanced bill was rejected by the White House and the House of Representatives. In December, I joined with a bipartisan majority of Senators in saying we need a better bill. Since then, negotiators made too little progress and brought an inadequate bill to the Senate this week.

I support giving law enforcement the tools they need to defend us. In October 2001, I voted for the Patriot Act with the agreement that its most controversial provisions would be subject to Congressional review. I've also voted to ensure the Patriot Act did not lapse while negotiators worked to improve the bill. On Wednesday, I voted for a bill offered by Senator John Sununu (R-NH) that makes some improvements to the Patriot Act reauthorization. But as I looked at the bill that came before the Senate on Thursday, it was clear to me that Congress can do a much better job of protecting both our security and our civil liberties. *For more details and Senator Murray's full statement:*

<http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=252135>

## Wrong Direction on Housing

While communities throughout our state struggle with affordable housing, President Bush has proposed cutting funding for public housing and community development in his latest budget plan. In the past few months, I've visited with housing leaders in Vancouver, King County and Spokane, and I know they need more support than the President's budget would provide. So on Thursday, I questioned the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Alphonso Jackson, about these misguided priorities. Specifically, the President's budget proposal would:

• Cut housing for the elderly by 26%

• Cut housing for the disabled by 50%

• Cut Community Development Block Grants by more than \$1 billion.

As the top Democrat on the committee that oversees HUD funding, I will push for a budget plan that better reflects the housing needs of our state and our nation.

To receive my Housing Updates, please visit:

<http://murray.senate.gov/economy/housingcomments.cfm>

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