

PATTY MURRAY'S WASHINGTON VIEW

U.S. Senator Patty Murray's Weekly Report to the People of Washington –August 25, 2006

A Victory on Plan B

After three years of delay, this week the FDA finally decided to make Plan B, an emergency contraceptive, available without a prescription for women 18 and older. For several years, I've worked to expand access to emergency contraceptives, which can prevent unintended pregnancies and reduce abortions. Senator Clinton and I held up the confirmation of two FDA commissioners in order to get a decision from the agency. While this is a victory, I hope the FDA we revisit the age restrictions, which are not based on medical research or scientific facts. Details:

<http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=262019>

Touring our State

Two weeks ago, I traveled to China to improve trade and relations with our state's third-largest trading partner. You can read my **Letter From China** here:

<http://murray.senate.gov/china>

Last week, I traveled throughout our state and met with working families, business leaders, veterans, and young people. We discussed transportation, the environment, workforce development, and community safety.

See photos of my travels:

<http://murray.senate.gov/photos>

Transportation: The Economic Engine of our Growing Communities

Last week I had the opportunity to view and discuss several critical transportation projects and issues including:

Clark County - Salmon Creek Interchange

On Friday I visited Vancouver and met with local leaders about the Salmon Creek interchange project, for which I secured \$2 million. I was pleased to hear from both local officials and those in the community who will benefit from the planned improvements. The funding will assist Clark County in beginning the process of building a new I-5 interchange at NE 139th Street. The project is expected to alleviate congestion and improve safety.

Cowlitz County - Lexington Bridge

Also on Friday, I joined Cowlitz County officials to celebrate the progress of the Lexington Bridge. In 2003 and 2004, I secured \$7.5 million in federal funding for the bridge, which will cross the Cowlitz River from State Route 411 in Lexington to I-5 at the Ostrander Road Interchange. This project is expected to save commuters time and improve safety.

Women's Transportation Seminar – 2006 WSDOT Public Transportation and Rail Division Conference

On Wednesday I spoke at the Women's Transportation Seminar on a range of transportation issues currently affecting Washington state. I also had the opportunity to update seminar participants on federal support for many of Washington state's transportation priorities.

The Environment: Protecting Washington state's Most Valuable Resources

So much of what we are as a state is defined by our gorgeous but fragile environment. Last week I spent time making sure that we continue to make the necessary investments to protect our environment.

Columbia River Jetties – Long Beach

On Tuesday I joined with community leaders from towns and ports along the Columbia River at Cape Disappointment State Park to discuss federal funding that I have secured for jetty repair. The funding is providing temporary repairs to the jetties that safeguard the navigability of the river. I heard from several officials about the importance of the funding and we discussed the critical role jetties, river dredging, and channel deepening efforts have played in the commercial success of the region.

Willapa Bay -- Spartina Eradication Tour

On Tuesday I also toured the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge to examine progress in efforts to eradicate invasive Spartina marsh grass. I have worked hard to get more than \$4 million in funding to combat the harmful Spartina scourge. Following the tour, I discussed the importance of the effort aboard an oyster barge in the refuge.

Renton - "Finish the Sam Chastain Waterfront Trail" Tour

On Wednesday I joined Renton Mayor Kathy Keolker on a tour of the Sam Chastain Waterfront Trail. I have worked to secure a federal investment of \$1.2 million in the pending transportation bill to complete the "missing link" of the trail, which will connect Coulon Park to the Cedar River Trail. The project will improve fish habitat and will improve access to Lake Washington.

Work Training: Giving At-Risk Youth the Skills They Will Need to Succeed

Youth Career Academy Experience Meeting

Last Friday I sat down with young people ages 14 through 18 to discuss their participation in the ESD # 112 Youth Career Academy. I heard first hand from young people who are benefiting from the program, which exposes troubled youth to a variety of career opportunities. The Youth Career Academy draws much of its funding from federal dollars provided in the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). I have been and will continue to fight to restore WIA funding that has been severely cut by the Bush Administration.

Veterans: Providing Assistance to those Who Have Sacrificed for Us

Veterans Roundtable Discussion

Last Thursday I convened a panel of experts for a roundtable discussion in Everett on how best to support veterans who are experiencing issues related to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and other mental health problems. Panelists included representatives from Naval Station Everett, the VA Post-Deployment Clinic, and the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs. Everett provided a wonderful setting for this important discussion as many local veterans turned out to participate in this constructive dialogue.

Public Safety: Streamlining Response Systems

Bellevue 911 Center Tour

Last Wednesday, I toured Bellevue's new communication Center. I recently secured \$1.5 million in federal funding for the construction of the facility.

Seattle - Coast Guard Operations Building Dedication

Last Monday, I spoke at the dedication of the new Coast Guard Operations Building which will house two Coast Guard units critical to operations in Seattle and the Pacific Northwest.