

PATTY MURRAY'S WASHINGTON VIEW

U.S. Senator Patty Murray's Weekly Report to the People of Washington – April 1, 2005

Defending Social Security

Over the last few months, I've made it clear that I'll fight any proposal to privatize Social Security. On Thursday, I participated in a Social Security forum in Seattle as part of my ongoing efforts to educate the public on the true state of the Social Security system, and the real ways to strengthen it for future generations.

I was joined at the event by my colleagues Senators Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), and Mary Landrieu (D-LA). It was attended by a diverse and enthusiastic audience, and gave us a chance to have a dialogue about the need to strengthen Social Security instead of dismantling it. We heard from three witnesses about the potential negative impacts of the Republican plan: the high-risk strategy of gambling with benefits on the stock market; potential benefit cuts under the Republican plan; and the importance of a strong, sound program to future generations of Americans.

The American people continue to be skeptical of the Republican plan to privatize Social Security. This plan would have a particularly negative impact on women. For example,

- Without Social Security, over half of female seniors would live in poverty.
- Privatization punishes women by greatly reducing (and for many eliminating) the progressive, lifetime, inflation-adjusted traditional benefits that benefit women.
- Women have lower earnings, 76 cents to every dollar earned by men, and benefit from Social Security's "progressive" benefits.
- Women are 10 times as likely as men to receive spouse or widow benefits.
- Social Security's survivor benefits play a critical role in protecting surviving spouses and children.

I look forward to continuing to work to address Social Security in the right way. That means, first and foremost, doing no harm to the system. It also means finding new ways for Americans to save outside of Social Security. Taking these measures will keep the system strong for future generations.

Promoting Economic Development

Everett Chamber of Commerce

On Friday, I delivered a keynote address to the Everett Chamber of Commerce. The event was attended by nearly 100 local business and community leaders. I talked about how eager I am to continue to work with the Chamber to strengthen the region's economy.

I know that to keep Everett's economy strong, we've got to focus on continued support for transportation programs like Community Transit, interchanges, Park & Ride, and Everett Transit; we've got to stand up for our workers, particularly in the aerospace industry; and we've got to support and protect the economic engines in the region, including Naval Station Everett. I'm listening to leaders and residents, and I'll continue to work hard to fund Everett's priorities so we can keep the local economy growing.

Port of Bellingham Waterfront Redevelopment Tour

On Friday, I toured the Port of Bellingham's waterfront redevelopment site and got a briefing on the project. Since 2003, the city of Bellingham and the Port have joined with the Waterfront Futures Group, a citizen group, to develop a compelling vision for the waterfront, which holds significant economic and environmental potential for Bellingham. On Jan. 20th, the Port received the deed for all 137 acres of

Georgia Pacific's waterfront property, and I was glad to have the opportunity to see the property and hear about the local vision for this valuable land.

Woodinville Tourism and Winery Tour and Discussion

On Wednesday, I toured Woodinville's tourist district and Woodinville wineries, including Chateau Ste. Michelle. This event was a great opportunity for me to see the fruits of the significant investments we've made in our state's wine industry, and in promoting tourism to strengthen local economies.

Growing up in Bothell, I remember riding my bike through fields that today are part of Chateau Ste. Michelle. Now, driving through the Woodinville area you can't help but see how the wine industry's success has helped fuel growth there. Over the past decade, wine has become a \$2.4 billion industry in our state, creating thousands of jobs along the way. Wine grapes are now our 4th largest fruit crop, and our wine industry continues to set the standard for premium wines, earning a worldwide reputation. That's a testament to the great work our wine producers are doing, and I intend to give them all the support they need to keep growing.

Get more information on my work for our wine industry:
<http://murray.senate.gov/wine>

Island County Economic Development Roundtable

On Friday, I attended an economic development roundtable in Oak Harbor with Island County business and community leaders. This event was a great opportunity to hear about local needs and concerns, and share ideas about how best to invest in the local economy. I'll continue to work with local residents and leaders to improve transportation and infrastructure to stimulate growth and promote job creation in Island County.

Island County Transit Visit

I'm proud to have secured more than \$4 million in funding for Island County Transit over the last four years. That money has purchased new buses, has improved infrastructure, and has upgraded and maintained Transit facilities. On Friday, I visited the Island County Transit Center to meet with transit leaders and employees, and to see firsthand the results of the funding I've secured. I had the opportunity to see one of the new buses Island County Transit has acquired, as well as the improved facilities, and I'm glad to see the progress being made to help residents get where they're going.

Supporting Education Partnerships

As a former pre-school teacher and a current member of the Senate HELP Committee, I have long supported innovative solutions to the challenges faced by our nation's schools. On Wednesday in Edmonds, I delivered the keynote address at a banquet for Powerful Partners, a non-profit coalition of six public elementary schools that work collaboratively to provide support and opportunities to students. The coalition fosters a caring and supportive school environment, something I know is critical in helping our children learn and succeed. I'm so proud of the initiative taken by organizations like Powerful Partners, and I'll keep supporting these partnerships in every way possible.

Middle East Blog

Last week, I traveled to the Middle East and Europe to visit our troops and to see some of these regions' emerging democracies up close. During the trip, I kept an online diary, or "blog," on my Web site. In case you're a new subscriber to my newsletter, or in case you missed last week's issue, I'd like to invite you to visit my Web site, where you can read my blog and see pictures to get the full story on my trip. Visit:

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