



**Congressman**

**Wally  
Herger**



**Reports from Washington**

**109th Congress - First Session**

**Volume Two**

Dear Friends:

Thank you to everyone who filled out the questionnaire in the last report, as well as those who attended one of the eight Social Security town hall meetings held this Spring throughout our congressional district. Knowing your point of view helps me better represent you in Washington, so I greatly appreciate your taking the time to communicate with me.

Our nation is facing significant challenges, both abroad and at home. The recent terrorist attacks in London demonstrate the continuing threat of terrorists who want to destroy people with values like ours. We are actively engaged in the War on Terrorism to counter this evil and ensure our generation and future generations live in a world that is safe and secure. On the domestic side, the substantial tax relief passed by Congress in 2001 and 2003 has spurred economic growth and helped lead our economy out of recession. Our economy has created 3.7 million new jobs since May 2003, but more work still needs to be done so that every American looking for a job is able to find one. In addition, Social Security faces serious fiscal challenges and, unless it is reformed, it is destined for insolvency. Congress is working diligently to strengthen the retirement security of our children and grandchildren to ensure that they, too, will have the assurance of a comfortable retirement.

The first seven months of the 109th Congress have been very busy. The House has passed legislation to ensure that our armed forces have the resources they need to successfully prosecute the War on Terrorism, and that the needs of our veterans are fully met. Congress passed and the president signed into law the REAL ID Act. This important national security measure will close loopholes identified by the 9/11 Commission that allowed terrorists to obtain multiple drivers licenses, and will expedite the construction of

a security fence near San Diego. Congress has worked to pass a comprehensive transportation measure that will improve public safety by making travel safer, foster economic growth, and fund several critical projects in Northern California. Bankruptcy and class action lawsuit reform have been enacted into law, representing important steps toward eliminating the legal abuses and frivolous lawsuits that have driven up costs for consumers and small businesses. An important measure has also been approved to bolster our nation's energy security and reduce our reliance on foreign sources of oil by encouraging increased domestic production and greater conservation.



I am working on legislation important to our district and nation. I've introduced again in this Congress the "Species Rescue Act," which would reform the Endangered Species Act (ESA) to ensure that the protection of public health and safety is afforded utmost priority. This measure responds to the tragic drowning deaths of three innocent people in Arboga, south of Marysville, during the 1997 floods, after the Arboga levee broke. Seven years earlier, the Army Corps of Engineers identified the levee as in need of immediate repair, and that absent such repairs, "loss of human life is expected," but the inflexibility of the ESA consultation process prevented these potentially life-saving repairs from being completed. And, as chairman of the subcommittee of jurisdiction, I am continuing to work on passing a bill that would extend and improve the extraordinarily successful 1996 welfare-to-work legislation.

Inside this newsletter you will find information about the annual town hall meetings I will be holding in August throughout California's Second District. I encourage you to attend one of these meetings so that I can have the benefit of your perspective.

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Sincerely,

WALLY HERGER  
Member of Congress

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# Town Hall Meeting Schedule

*I will be holding a series of town hall meetings throughout our Congressional District. Town hall meetings are an excellent opportunity to influence what happens in Congress. I hope you and your neighbors will come and participate by asking questions, offering comments, and helping me to represent you better.*



*Congressman Herger addresses veterans in Shasta County at a Memorial Day commemoration. Herger joined other speakers in thanking the men and women of the armed forces for their service.*



## Tuesday, August 23

### Marysville

9:00 AM - Yuba County One Stop  
1114 Yuba Street

### Gridley

1:00 PM - Gridley City Council Chambers  
685 Kentucky Street

## Wednesday, August 24

### Yreka

9:00 AM - City Council Chambers  
701 Fourth Street

### Weaverville

3:00 PM - Trinity County Library  
211 North Main Street

## Thursday, August 25

### Willows

9:00 AM - City Council Chambers  
201 North Lassen Street

### Colusa

1:00 PM - City Council Chambers  
425 Webster Street

### Woodland

5:00 PM - Public Library Office  
250 First Street

## Friday, August 26

### Red Bluff

11:00 AM - City Council Chambers  
555 Washington Street

### Anderson

3:00 PM - City Council Chambers  
1887 Howard Street

## Beale AFB Update

I want to thank the entire "Save Beale" team for their tireless efforts to keep Beale Air Force Base open. With your input, the Department of Defense (DoD) recommended that Beale should be our nation's premier reconnaissance center. The Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process, which requires a Commission to thoroughly review the DoD recommendations, will continue throughout this year. It is important that we keep promoting Beale's high military value to ensure that the base remains open and a strong economic presence in Northern California.

## Working to Improve Foster Care System

As the Chairman of the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources, which has jurisdiction over welfare, foster care, adoption, and other issues, I am working to address challenges facing children and families in our foster care system. Our subcommittee has received testimony from dozens of experts about a system that has failed too many kids, leaving them at risk of abuse and neglect without addressing the problems that led to it in the first place. Reform is desperately needed. I am working on legislation that would provide more flexibility and accountability in spending taxpayer resources to better meet the needs of children and families. It focuses on preventing the abuse and neglect that result in too many family breakups, instead of just dealing with it after it occurs and has already torn families apart.

## Private Property Rights Under Assault

America's founders saw the right to own private property as fundamental to our liberty. Accordingly, the Constitution's Fifth Amendment says that government can take private property only for "public use" and must provide "just compensation" to the owner. Historically, this "eminent domain" power has been limited to legitimate public uses, such as highways and bridges. However, in a narrow 5-4 decision in *Kelo v. City of New London*, the Supreme Court decided that government can seize private homes or land and give it to someone else. This appalling decision demonstrates why the Senate must confirm Supreme Court justices who respect the Constitution's limits on government power and do not make law from the bench. In the meantime, I am working with others in Congress to pass legislation to discourage state and local governments from violating this fundamental right.

## 2005 Questionnaire Results

Thousands of Northern Californians responded to the survey printed in the last "Reports from Washington." I want to thank each of you who responded. Your input is very important in determining how I can better represent you in Congress. I have reprinted the questions below with the results of this year's survey.

1. Do you support legislation that would make it unlawful for states to issue driver's licenses to illegal aliens?

**Yes 83.4% No 12.2% Undecided 4.4%**

2. Should the United States halt payments to the United Nations until the investigation into the Oil for Food Scandal is concluded?

**Yes 61.1% No 22.8% Undecided 15.8%**

3. Should the United States remain a member of the United Nations?

**Yes 51.1% No 30.7% Undecided 18.2%**

4. Would you support opening a portion of the North Slope of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) to oil exploration, provided it was done in an environmentally sensitive manner?

**Yes 66.4% No 27.2% Undecided 6.4%**

5. Would you favor allowing some taxpayers to invest a small portion of their Social Security savings?

**Yes 50.3% No 34.9% Undecided 14.8%**

6. Recently, a school administrator issued an order to not allow students to view copies of historical documents, such as the Declaration of Independence and the Gettysburg Address, because these documents mention God. Do you agree with this decision?

**Yes 2.7% No 94.7% Undecided 2.6%**

7. Which of the following Fundamental Tax Reform proposal would you support, if any?

a. Flat Tax

**Yes 47.6% No 13.4% Undecided 39.0%**

b. National Sales Tax

**Yes 24.7% No 24.1% Undecided 51.2%**

c. Continue to reduce taxes in the existing system

**Yes 33.9% No 19.4% Undecided 46.7%**

8. In your opinion, are we making progress in the War on Terrorism?

**Yes 54.9% No 28.6% Undecided 16.5%**

9. On the whole, do you believe President George W. Bush is doing a good job?

**Yes 59.5% No 31.5% Undecided 9.0%**

10. On the whole, do you believe Congress is doing a good job?

**Yes 20.4% No 50.6% Undecided 29.0%**

## Your Retirement, Your Future

Social Security has been a great success for millions of seniors. However, the system is threatened by the changing demographics of our society. Unless significant reforms are made, the program faces a permanent, structural deficit.

Social Security's "pay-as-you-go" financing structure worked well when the population was young, but is no longer sustainable. In just 13 years Social Security will go into the "red," and start paying out more to beneficiaries than it takes in from workers' payroll taxes. By the time today's 30-year-old retires, the program will have exhausted its fictional reserves. Why fictional? Because while most Americans think their Social Security taxes are put away annually for safekeeping, unfortunately this is not the case.

In reality, the federal government spends every penny of the Social Security Trust Fund on other government programs, "borrowing" from Social Security, and placing government IOUs in the trust fund. The federal government must either borrow money or raise taxes to pay back the trust fund.

I believe it's time for Congress to stop spending the Social Security Trust Fund. If we are to make any progress in protecting Social Security for future generations, we must first make changes that promote individual ownership. Although this idea seems simple and straightforward, it is one that is not widely accepted in Washington. Congress is currently considering a plan that would protect the Social Security surplus - the excess taken in from an individual's payroll taxes - for Social Security only. It would no longer

be used to mask the size of the annual federal deficit. On a completely voluntary basis, the Social Security surplus will be dedicated to individual accounts, where it will be invested in guaranteed, marketable Treasury securities - real assets that workers own. When a worker retires, account balances will be used to help pay his or her Social Security benefit. In addition, the account balance accumulated throughout a worker's lifetime will be inheritable. Eventually, the program will be expanded to give workers more investment options with their individual accounts, in a way that does not impose investment risk on workers and does not harm the Social Security trust fund.

This is only one of many changes that must be made to Social Security to ensure long-term solvency. Although other changes will involve difficult choices, Congress is committed to protecting this program for future generations. It would be easier just to ignore the problem. But that's not responsible, nor is it fair to future retirees. Delay just makes any solution more costly - translating into higher taxes and/or benefit cuts. A recent Social Security trustees' report shows that each year we wait to fix the problem adds roughly \$600 billion to the cost of fixing Social Security for good.

Now is the time to act, while the problems confronting Social Security are still manageable. Locking away the trust fund surplus represents a positive step to fix a decades-old problem. But it will take more to fully fix Social Security's solvency problems. As we move forward in this debate, I am hopeful that Republicans and Democrats can put aside partisan differences and work to resolve the problems facing the Social Security system -- problems that affect everyone.

*Congressman Herger congratulates cub scout Jacob Farrington for earning a badge. Herger encouraged the scouts to stay true to their oath and become the future leaders of America.*



### Service Academy Applications

I have the honor of recommending young men and women for appointment to our nation's service academies. These schools include the U.S. Military Academy, the Naval Academy, the Air Force Academy, and the Merchant Marine Academy.

Appointments are available to young men and women between 17 and 22 years of age who are residents of our Congressional District. The application deadline is October 31, 2005. If you are interested in this educational experience, please call 530-893-8363, or write me at the following address:

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**Chico, CA 95973**

Congressman  
**Wally Herger**



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 Presorted Standard

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**2005 Town Hall Schedule**