

Congressman talks jobs, health care, immigration in visit to North

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NORTH - U.S. Rep. Joe Wilson brought his re-election campaign to North High School on Saturday, speaking to approximately four dozen citizens and fellow members of the Republican Party.

The congressman asked those in attendance to write questions they wished answered and proceeded to answer them

The first question concerned the creation of jobs. Wilson replied that Boeing is planning to build a plant near Orangeburg and that the plant would have a ripple effect on employment in the area.

"Unemployment in the Orangeburg County area is the highest it's ever been during the past year. We need the private not the public sector to grow and produce more jobs. These jobs will be more stable and produce other jobs as well. The housing industry will have

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How do you feel about Wilson's vote for the 2008 bailout? Share your thoughts with our poll.

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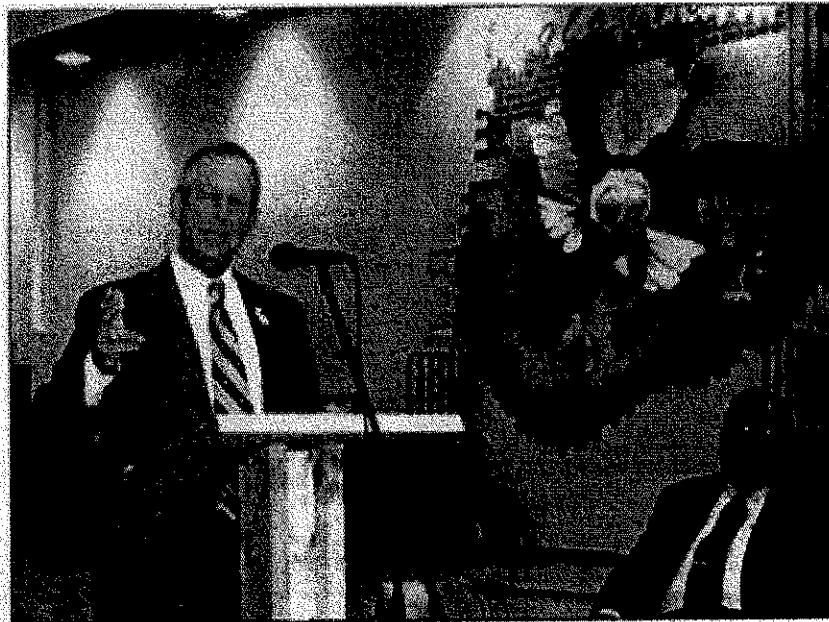
to grow to meet the demands of the new workers and that in turn will cause the schools to grow.

"As your representative in Congress, I understand that low taxes, worker training, right-to-work protections and less regulatory red tape will attract business," Wilson continued. "I believe we should provide broad, growth-oriented, permanent incentives for economic activity across all sectors and industries, with immediate application and sustained, long-term implications. This will ensure that Washington takes a back seat to Main Street and job creators are empowered to do what they do best - create jobs."

He reviewed his Long Term Job Creation Policies:

- A 5% across-the-board income tax cut.
- A decrease in capital gains and corporate taxes.
- Retaining the workforce.
- Bonus depreciation.
- Home purchase tax credit.
- IRA withdrawals tax- and penalty-free.
- Increase student loan tax deduction and Small business tax deduction that equals 20% of

See WILSON, AB



T&D CORRESPONDENT SHERRYL PETERS

U.S. Rep. Joe Wilson addresses a meeting at North High School on Saturday.



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the income.

The next questions concerned health care. Wilson explained that he was against the current Health Care Act and said he favored a Health Care Insurance Reform instead.

One of his main concerns is that the relationship between a doctor and a patient will be destroyed if the government places a government employee between a doctor and a patient.

"We're talking about lives," he said. "There needs to be a solid relationship and I feel we need to repeal the current Health Care Act and replace it with the insurance reforms we need. Right now, some 16 million private/small business jobs will be lost due to the current Act. This is unacceptable.

"I feel businesses and individuals should be able to shop for insurance/health care across state lines and that small businesses should be eligible for associate plans/group rates. I also think pre-existing conditions should be covered. If you want to read my suggested plan, look up HR49.44."

Other questions concerned energy, to which Wilson replied that he felt we should seek energy independence on three main fronts.

■ First, American workers should create American energy.

■ Second, Americans should fight energy taxation.

■ Third, plans that include alternative sources of energy should be promoted.

Concerning illegal immigration, Wilson stated that "good fences make good neighbors." He explained that this would help all countries involved and that the borders of the United States of America need to be secured.

Wilson also stated that he is in favor of literacy and education. He encouraged anyone wishing him or his staff to help promote literacy to contact Bill Walker of his office.

Several individuals asked how he felt about impeaching President Barack Obama because they felt that the president was not following party

guidelines.

Wilson said, "I am in the process of creating a new 'Contract for America' designed to solicit information

and ideals from all parties. I support President Obama's decision to send reinforcement troops to Afghanistan. I am being positive about our president and his policies, but I do feel we need to repeal the Health Care Act and that we must make certain our borders are secure. We are going through some tough times but I am optimistic about the outcome."

In closing, Wilson said, "I want to encourage every citizen to grow a backbone and exercise their free will when it comes to expressing their opinions about governmental policies. You have the right to voice your opinion and to vote out or against any candidate or policy. Laws can be repealed. I also want to ask you to visit my office in Washington, D.C. It belongs to you. If you have a question, please send it to my office at 212 Cannon HOB, Washington, DC 20515."

Wilson was introduced by his deputy district director, Earl Brown, following the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag led by U.S. Navy veteran and former North Mayor Bruce Buckheister.

Wilson also recognized "some individuals who have been important to me in my life. Ms. Zilla Hinton served as a mentor when I was just starting out. She is an advocate for anywhere she lives and I appreciate her friendship."

"Charlie and Cam Underwood were my advisers in high school and are still setting standards."

"I feel fortunate to also have Grace and Dean Livingston in the audience today. They established high reporting standards for The Times and Democrat newspaper that are still being followed by the print media."

"The town of North is one of the finest towns in South Carolina. Its town council is to be commended on its diligence and hard work. When I came into town, the first thing I noticed was how good the downtown area looks."

Before Wilson's remarks, guest speakers gave brief excerpts of their concerns and

future visions.

Harriet Lane, North mayor pro tem, described the North of her youth and noted that there had been many changes in the economic make-up North throughout the years.

"This year, the North Town

Council faced the creation of its toughest budget ever," Lane said. "We went over every item line by line until we reached a balanced budget. Then, we had to call together all town employees and give them the sad news that there would be no raises this year. But our employees simply replied that it was OK; they felt lucky just to have jobs."

Rebecca Battle-Bryant of Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College explained to the audience that OCTC remains on the cutting edge of manufacturing technology.

"Manufacturing is one of the biggest employment areas in Orangeburg and Calhoun counties," she said. "Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College is a great resource for individuals to hone skills needed for employment in this area. We offer credit, non-credit, adult education and One-Stop services for individuals and we are opening a center in Calhoun County for those who may not be able to come to the Orangeburg campus."

"Research shows that the main job openings will appear in this area as transportation, instrumentation, industrial maintenance and supply chain management," Battle-Bryant continued. "OCTC is prepared to lead the way with its course offerings. Also, I want to make everyone aware that OCTC offers scholarships for our two-year program in green technology. Please call the college for additional information."

Gregg Robinson, director of the Orangeburg County Development Commission, said, "We work with at the federal level to create jobs in our area. One of the main ideas I try to instill in people is that you have to take a vested interest in your community to help your community grow and thrive. We are critically trying to create jobs in the North area because if you are employed close to where you live, you are able to spend your money on items other than transportation to and from work. You can keep

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more of your discretionary income at your disposal."

He continued, "We are working on the Western Orangeburg County Industrial Park and you will be seeing more marketing and more turning of dirt soon. We have \$2 million to continue work on this park and it will bring jobs to this area."

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