

SEPTEMBER 2007

GABRIELLE GIFFORDS

SERVING SOUTHERN ARIZONA

Senior Legislative Update



8th CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Dear Friends,

Arizona is now the fastest growing state in the nation and our senior population is growing with it—jumping from 90,000 in 1965 to over 758,000 people today.

I believe it is very important we provide our seniors with the best health care available. On August 1, 2007, the House passed the Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act (CHAMP), a bill that would strengthen Medicare financially while providing new benefits and services.

In addition to Medicare improvements, I also cosponsored and voted to support federal stem cell research, to permit the re-importation of safe and effective prescription drugs from Canada, and to allow the government to negotiate with drug companies to lower drug prices.

On June 6, 2007, I introduced the Safe and Effective Drug Development Act (H.R. 2592), a bill that would create and fund public-private partnerships between the FDA and universities or non-profits to modernize drug safety and accelerate innovation.

I believe providing the best possible health care assures all Americans will age with dignity.

Sincerely Yours,

Gabrielle Giffords
Member of Congress

P.S. Visit me in person at my "Congress on Your Corner" event Saturday, September 29th in Tucson from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Safeway on the Northeast corner of Sabino Canyon and Tanque Verde Roads. For more information, please call 881-3588.



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Congresswoman Giffords 2007 Legislative Update

I believe that we have an obligation to our seniors. We must assure they have the health care they need, and that we keep our promises to protect Social Security.

That is why I have cosponsored:

Stem Cell Research (H.R. 6).

Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act of 2007 (H.R. 4), to lower drug prices.

Re-importation of safe and effective drugs from Canada (H.R. 380).

Mental Health Parity Act (H.R. 1424), a critical component of health care that is often overlooked.

The Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 82) which protects Social Security beneficiaries.

And I introduced:

The Safe and Effective Drug Development Act (H.R. 2592) aimed at making drugs safer and streamlining the drug development process.

Protecting our Seniors from Neglect and Abuse

I am a cosponsor of the Elder Justice Act (H.R. 1783), the first comprehensive federal effort to address and prevent elder abuse, neglect and exploitation. This bipartisan legislation will:

- provide victim assistance to seniors,
- improve the quality of long-term care,
- provide special support for at-risk elders, and
- provide resources to states for abuse prevention and improved prosecution.

Strengthening Medicare – The CHAMP Act

In August I voted to support H.R. 3162, the Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act (CHAMP). This bill made several important changes to Medicare.

- **Provides Free Preventative Medicare Benefits** like cancer and diabetes screening. Allows Medicare to add even more free preventative benefits.



▲ Congresswoman Giffords hosted Medicare Forums in Green Valley, Bisbee and Tucson to discuss proposed improvements to our Medicare system.

• **Protects Low-Income Seniors**

– Assists low-income seniors with Medicare cost sharing and premiums – up to \$3,700 per year – and raises the asset test from \$4,000 to \$17,000.

• **Protects Seniors in Rural Areas**

– Extends special provisions in law that protect access to hospitals, doctors, and ambulance services in rural areas.

• **Protects Medicare by stopping overpayments to private insurance companies** and

reinvesting money in traditional Medicare.

- This saves seniors in our District \$3 million in out of pocket costs, and
- Extends the fiscal solvency of the Medicare Trust Fund by two years.

GREEN VALLEY NEWS

Giffords Promotes Medicare Revision

By Jaime Richardson
August 19, 2007

U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords led a forum at the Canoa Hills Social Center on Saturday to address proposed improvements to Medicare, focusing on the recently passed Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act (CHAMP).

Giffords was joined by Pima Council on Aging Ombudsman Stewart Gabel and two representatives from AARP. More than 100 Green Valley residents were in attendance.

Stay Safe From Scams Targeting Seniors

Arizona has the highest rate of identity theft of any state in the United States.

In February and July, I hosted forums with Attorney General Terry Goddard and Tom Collier from the Better Business Bureau of Southern Arizona to discuss scams targeting seniors and useful information on what to watch out for.



▲ Congresswoman Giffords meets with her Seniors Advisory Council to discuss local and federal issues important to our seniors.

In Congress I'm also working with my colleagues to address some of the issues surrounding scams and identity theft. In June, I voted for the Securely Protect Yourself Against Cyber Trespass Act "SPY ACT" (H.R. 964), which makes it illegal for someone to secretly install spy ware programs on your computer. H.R. 964 also makes it illegal to trick someone into disclosing personal information over the internet.

Efforts in Congress to address this problem are important, but there is a lot you can do to protect yourself from scams and identity theft.

TIPS TO AVOID SCAMS

- Never throw away ATM receipts, credit statements, credit cards or bank statements in a usable form—shred all these documents.
- Never send money or give out personal information such as credit card numbers and expiration dates, bank account numbers, dates of birth or social security numbers to unfamiliar companies or unknown persons.
- Legitimate businesses will never ask you for your bank account number or password in an email.
- Review a copy of your credit report at least once each year. Notify the credit bureau in writing of any questionable entries and follow through until they are explained or removed. To order a free credit report, visit www.annualcreditreport.com or call 877-322-8228.
- Never sign blank insurance claim forms.
- Never respond to an offer you don't understand thoroughly.

Important Information

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Police, Fire or Ambulance 911

Poison Control (800) 222-1222

Area Agency on Aging 24-Hour Senior Helpline (888) 264-2258

Adult Abuse Hotline (877) 767-2385

<http://www.de.state.az.us/aaa/apsciu>

Information and Referral Services (520) 881-1794
www.azinfo.org

Mental Health Emergency (800) 796-6762
www.samhc.com

FRAUD & SCAMS

Arizona Department of Economic Security Fraud Hotline (800) 251-2436
www.lawforseniors.org

Office of the Attorney General (520) 628-6504
www.azag.gov/seniors
www.azag.gov/consumer

HEALTH

Division of Aging and Adult Services (602) 542-4446
www.de.state.az.us/aaa

Pima Council on Aging (520) 790-7262
<http://www.pcoa.org>

Pima Health System & Services Caregiver Education & Support Program (520) 243-8376
www.arizonacaregivers.org/phs

Southeastern Arizona Governments Organization (SEAGO) Area Agency on Aging for Cochise County (520) 432-5301
www.seago.org/aaa



Veteran's Health Care Update

I have the privilege of representing 91,920 military retirees in Arizona and issues affecting our veterans are very important to me.

As a member of the House Armed Services Committee, I will continue to look for ways to ensure that those who have worn the nation's uniform are treated with respect and gratitude. I have formed a Veterans Advisory Council of local vets throughout Southern Arizona who advise me about legislation in Congress and keep me informed about veterans' issues and concerns in the district.

There are a number of legislative initiatives before the Congress to improve health care for our veterans.

Wounded Warrior Assistance Act (H.R. 1538)

Passed the House on March 28, 2007

H.R. 1538 would improve the management of medical care, personnel actions and quality of life issues for members of the Armed Forces who are receiving medical care. When this bill was in committee, I included an amendment that would increase the reporting requirement on mental health services for returning combat veterans, requiring more accountability from the Department of Defense.



▲ Congresswoman Giffords meets with Miriam Cohen, the oldest living woman Marine, who was honored by the Pima Council on Aging.

Joshua Omgig Veterans Suicide Prevention Act (H.R. 327)

Passed the House on March 21, 2007

This bill would require the Veterans Administration (VA) to develop and implement a comprehensive veterans' suicide prevention program, would require the VA to provide 24-hour mental health care services to veterans, and would require that a suicide prevention counselor be available at every VA facility.

Retired Pay Restoration Act (H.R. 303) and H.R. 650

Referred to House Committees on Armed Services and Veterans' Affairs

As a cosponsor of H.R. 303 and H.R. 650, I support giving full concurrent receipt for individuals who were retired or separated from military service due to a service-connected disability, and requiring the VA to conduct a pilot program to provide facilities for veterans with Alzheimer's disease.



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