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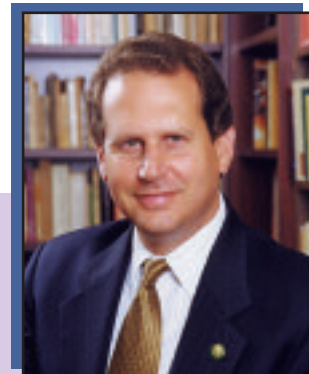
CONGRESSIONAL UPDATE

Jobs and the Economy

Medicare Prescription Drug Program

Congressman Lincoln Diaz-Balart

Serving Florida's 21st District



Important Information about the Cost of Medicines and Medicare

As a Member of the House Rules Committee, I helped pass this historic legislation to help seniors pay for their medicines, and assist Medicare beneficiaries nationwide. America's neediest seniors (individuals with incomes of up to \$12,900 a year; \$16,600 per couple) in just a few months will receive a credit of \$600 to help them purchase their medications. And, beginning in 2006:

- ✓ Seniors with incomes of up to \$10,294 (\$13,250 per couple); will pay only \$1 for generic prescriptions and \$3 for brand name medicines.
- ✓ Those with incomes of up to \$13,896.90 (\$17,887.50 per couple); will pay only \$2 for generic medications and \$5 for brand names.
- ✓ Seniors with incomes of up to \$15,441, (19,875 per couple) will pay only a minimal monthly premium, an initial deductible of \$50, and then only 15% of their prescription drug costs up to \$3,600, after which they will only pay \$2 for generic drugs, \$5 for brand names.

Just in the district that I am honored to represent, more than 60,000 seniors are in the above three categories of beneficiaries of the new law.

- ✓ All other seniors will be able to pay a \$250 deductible, after which 75% of their first \$2,250 in expenses will be paid for by Medicare. After \$3,600 annually in out of pocket costs, the program will pay almost all their drug expenses.

For more information, visit: www.house.gov/diaz-balart

STRONG ECONOMIC GROWTH



As 2003 draws to an end, I thought it important to share with you some noteworthy statistics regarding the turnaround of the economy:

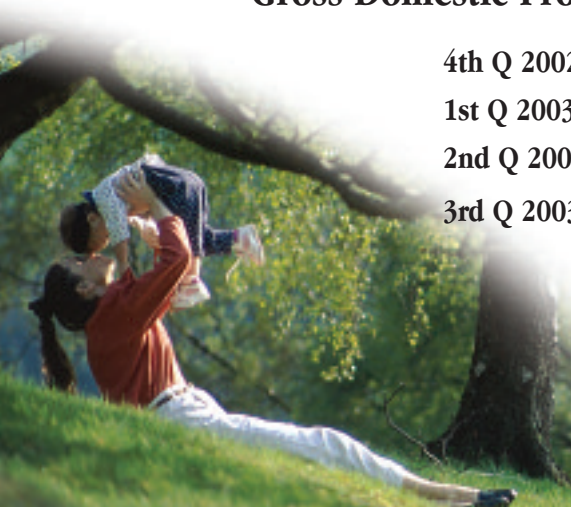
- The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by an amazing 8.2% during the third quarter of 2003, and 3.3% in the second quarter, making 8 straight quarters of positive economic growth;
- The week ending November 22, 2003 saw 11,000 fewer Americans claim unemployment. The lowest since January, 2001;
- As a result of the economic stimulus provided by the U.S. Congress, the Dow Jones Industrial Average has risen by 32% since March. The NASDAQ has seen an increase of more than 50%;
- Disposable personal income is up 3.8% in 2003.

I am encouraged by the improvement in the economy. There is no doubt that the American workforce, combined with the tenacity of small business and with the President's and Congress' policy initiatives to encourage economic growth, have played an important role in this strong economic turnaround.

The U.S. Economy Grew 8.2% in 3rd Quarter, the Fastest Pace in 20 Years.

Gross Domestic Product Growth Rate

4th Q 2002	1.4% increase
1st Q 2003	1.4% increase
2nd Q 2003	3.3% increase
3rd Q 2003	<u>8.2% increase</u>



FEDERAL FUNDS FOR OUR COMMUNITY

I am pleased to report that this year, under my direction, Congress will be sending funding back to our community for critical projects, including:

- \$1.5 million for the University of Miami William Lehman Injury Research Center/Ryder Trauma Center for trauma medical training and medical procedure development..
- \$650,000 for Barry University - to provide primary health care services to more than 450,000 medically disadvantaged people living in our community as well as training for health care professionals for careers in primary health care.
- \$2.5 million for a Department of Defense high technology research and development project that will create jobs in Miami-Dade County.
- \$3 million for Pembroke Pines I-75 improvements. These funds will specifically be dedicated to reconfigure the Interchange at Pines Boulevard and construct a Pembroke Road Overpass to reduce burdensome congestion.
- \$900,000 for South Florida Goodwill. This new help for low-income, disabled people will immediately create 250 new jobs and \$3,120,000 in new wages in our community.
- \$750,000 for the ARISE Foundation. Since 1996, over 3,000 ARISE –trained instructors have taught more than 2 million hours of life skills to at-risk youth within Florida's Department of Juvenile Justice.