

Rep. Petri's E-Newsletter

July 9, 2009

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The Climate Change Vote

By far, the most controversial legislation to reach the House floor last month was H.R. 2454, the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 - also known as the "Cap-and-Trade" (or "Cap-and-Tax") bill, which is intended to lessen global warming by curbing carbon dioxide emissions through a system of fees and transferable permits.

On June 26, the House voted 219 to 212 to approve the bill. I voted "no."

Global warming is a serious concern, but I opposed the bill because of the considerable negative consequences it would have on our state.

With pulp and paper, food processing, foundries and printing, Wisconsin has the single most manufacturing-intensive economy in the country on a per capita basis. Our industries are already struggling and cannot afford added burdens at this time. Furthermore, the people of east-central Wisconsin would likely see our utility bills skyrocket while other parts of the country could see a windfall. In essence, our wealth would be transferred to the coasts which benefit from hydropower and other alternatives.

While the impact of this bill would hit us particularly hard, it threatens considerable damage to the economy as a whole. It would create a maze of federal bureaucracies and red tape to administer its provisions, expand more than two-dozen federal agencies, establish a National Climate Service and vastly expand the power of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Although we need to respond to climate change, we have to find ways to do it without jeopardizing our economy and global competitiveness. Without a strong economy, we won't be able to pay for the changes we need to make.

Coming Up In Congress

Health Care: The House and Senate leaderships are determined to pass legislation by late July or early August to bring about universal - or near universal - health care. If they succeed, they will come back after the August district work period to negotiate ("reconcile") the differences between the bills approved by each chamber. For better or worse, this is a major undertaking which will have far-reaching effects on health care, which makes up one-sixth of our economy.

The details have not been finalized, but the House leadership's approach seems to be to prod Americans to participate either in a public health care plan or else in a private plan which has been approved by a new Health Choices Administration. The HCA would establish extensive requirements, mandates and limitations for health care plans for the individuals who use them until those covered qualify for Medicare.

Businesses which choose not to offer HCA-approved insurance for their employees, and individuals who choose not to participate, would be taxed. Individuals who do participate could qualify for subsidies.

The President has repeatedly said that if you like your current health insurance, you won't have to change it. The actual situation appears to be more complicated, however, given the incentives and penalties being considered.

The alternative Republican plan would extend tax savings and provide subsidies for private insurance while reforming regulations which unnecessarily raise costs. Lacking control of the House, Senate and presidency, however, the minority-party's ability to influence events will be limited.

Spending Bills: The House has approved five of the 12 fiscal year 2010 spending bills, and the leadership hopes to get the remaining seven approved by the end of the month. H.R. 2997, the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Appropriations Act was approved today, and the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2010 is currently being considered. As yet, the Senate has been able to complete work on its version of only one of the bills.

Transportation: The Administration and the Senate are moving forward with an 18-month extension of current programs, whereas the House has a 6-year reauthorization bill. The conflict between the two approaches should be resolved this month. We also need to shore up the Highway Trust Fund this month to make up for declining gas and truck tax revenues.

Supreme Court Nominee: The Senate Judiciary Committee will begin confirmation hearings July 13 on Judge Sonia Sotomayer's nomination to the Supreme Court.

Financial Regulations: The Financial Services Committee is scheduled to hold several days of hearings on new financial regulations starting July 15, with full committee consideration of legislation by the end of the month.

Regional Airline Safety: As Ranking Republican on the Aviation Subcommittee, I am working with bipartisan leadership of the Transportation Committee to introduce legislation by the end of this month to address issues arising out of the Colgan Airline crash outside Buffalo earlier this year.

What I've Been Up To

In Wisconsin: Over the past month I was honored to participate in a dedication ceremony for the Grand River Valley Veterans Memorial in Markesan and spoke to students attending Badger Boys State at Ripon College.

Various visits and tours included:

* The Tri-County Single-Stream Recycling Facility in Appleton. This new facility consolidates the recycling operations of Winnebago, Brown and Outagamie Counties.

* The Kaysun Corporation in Manitowoc, Muthig Industries in Fond du Lac and Patriot Taxiways, a defense-related start-up business in Lomira with a commitment to employing disabled veterans.

* The Child Advocacy Center at the Children's Hospital of Wisconsin-Fox Valley in Neenah.

Also, I met with local officials in various cities in east-central Wisconsin, including Manitowoc's new mayor, Justin Nickels.

I attended dairy breakfasts in Manitowoc, Sheboygan and Fond du Lac, and helped serve the eggs.

And I was especially pleased to present an Air Medal from the Navy to State Rep. John Townsend in recognition of his "meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight from 11 May 1965 to 21 February 1966" during the Vietnam War.

To see photos from some of these activities, click here:
<http://petri.house.gov/gallery.shtml>

In Washington: I participated on a National Transportation Policy Project panel; managed aviation bills on the floor of the House; spoke at a Coalition for Recreational Trails event; and met with Sarah Pritzl, the winner of my 2009 Congressional Art Competition. The

Kiel High School senior's prize-winning photo will be displayed in the Capitol Building for one year along with the artworks of contest winners from other congressional districts.

Coming Up In Wisconsin

Town Meetings: I plan to hold 12 town meetings in August at locations throughout east-central Wisconsin. Please stop by to discuss issues of federal concern in a group setting. Here's the schedule:

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5

- 9:00 - 10:00 a.m. **CHILTON**
Calumet County Courthouse
206 Court St., Room 025 (Use west entrance)
- 11:00 - 12:00 Noon **DARBOY**
Town of Buchanan Town Hall
N178 County Road N

THURSDAY, AUGUST 6

- 9:30 - 10:30 a.m. **OMRO**
City Hall
205 South Webster Ave., Council Chambers

FRIDAY, AUGUST 7

- 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. **HOWARDS GROVE**
Village Hall, 913 South Wisconsin Drive
Community Center
- 2:30 - 3:30 p.m. **MANITOWOC**
Manitowoc Public Library, 707 Quay St.,
Balkansky Community Room

MONDAY, AUGUST 10

- 9:30 - 10:30 a.m. **GREEN LAKE**
Caestecker Public Library
518 Hill St., Conference Room
- 2:30 - 3:30 p.m. **HORICON**
City Hall, 404 East Lake St.
Activity Room A

THURSDAY, AUGUST 13

9:00 - 10:00 a.m. **OAKFIELD**
Community Center, 130 North Main St.

3:30 - 4:30 p.m. **WATERTOWN**
Municipal Building
106 Jones St., City Council Chambers

FRIDAY, AUGUST 14

10:00 - 11:00 a.m. **ADAMS**
Municipal Building, 101 North Main Street
Council Chambers

1:00 - 2:00 p.m. **WILD ROSE**
Community Center, 500 Division St.

3:00 - 4:00 p.m. **MONTELLO**
Marquette County Courthouse, 77 West Park St.
Public Safety Training Room

Small Business Conference: I have scheduled a conference entitled "Assistance to Small Business: Leveraging Local, State and Federal Resources for Success," to be held at Lakeshore Technical College in Cleveland on Aug. 12 from 8:30 am to 3 pm.

The program will feature specific workshop sessions for all types of small businesses. Panel presentations will provide opportunities for those who have been successful in accessing local, state and federal resources to share their tips and ideas.

The registration deadline is July 31. Detailed information can be found on my Web site at: <http://petri.house.gov> or by calling my Fond du Lac office at (800) 242-4883.

Legislative Update

Pakistan Aid: On June 11, by a vote of 234 to 185, the House approved H.R. 1886, the Pakistan Enduring Assistance and Cooperation Enhancement (PEACE) Act. This bill would authorize \$1.5 billion annually between Fiscal Years 2010 and 2013, for economic aid and development assistance. It also would authorize \$300 million in FY 2010, and such sums as may be necessary through 2013, in counterterrorism assistance.

I voted "no" because the bill failed to ensure congressional oversight while costing \$9.1 billion over five years. There has been no Senate action.

Supplemental Spending: On June 16, by a vote of 226 to 202, the House approved H.R. 2346, the Fiscal Year 2009 War Supplemental Appropriations Act. This bill provides

\$81 billion in war funding plus \$15 billion for military construction, foreign assistance, flu pandemic preparedness, and a number of other spending items.

I voted "no" because other spending items were inserted which should have gone through the normal legislative process. Additionally, the bill contains \$5.8 billion (7 percent) more than the President's request for ongoing war operations and \$6 billion (63 percent) more than the President's request for other spending.

Guantanamo Bay: On June 18, by a vote of 212 to 213, the House rejected an amendment to H.R. 2847, the Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. The amendment would have barred the use of funds in the bill to close the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

I voted in favor of the amendment. I oppose closing the terrorist detention facilities at Guantanamo Bay until the President can come up with a reasonable plan for maintaining custody of those inmates who are too dangerous to release.

Commerce-Justice-Science Appropriations: On June 18, by a vote of 259 to 157 the House approved H.R. 2847, the Fiscal Year 2010 Commerce-Justice-Science and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, which would appropriate \$64.3 billion for the Departments of Commerce and Justice as well as NASA, the National Science Foundation, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR), and other related programs.

I voted "no" because the bill would spend \$6.8 billion (11.7 percent) more than was enacted for 2009. Congress needs to show more spending restraint. The Senate has not yet considered its version of the bill.

Legislative Branch Appropriations: On June 19, by a vote of 232 to 178 the House approved H.R. 2918, the Fiscal Year Legislative Branch Appropriations Act. This bill provides a total of \$4.7 billion for both Houses of Congress and all legislative branch agencies.

I voted "no" because the bill would spend \$300 million (6.3 percent) more than was enacted for 2009. The Senate passed its version of the legislation July 6.

Homeland Security Appropriations: On June 24, by a vote of 289 to 37, the House approved H.R. 2892, the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2010. This bill would provide \$42.6 billion for the Department of Homeland Security.

I voted "no" because it contained spending increases of \$595 million above last year's appropriation, and because agencies normally funded through this appropriations bill have already received \$3 billion outside of the normal appropriations process - mostly as a result of the emergency stimulus bill earlier this year. The Senate has not yet acted on this legislation.

Defense Authorization: On June 25, by a vote of 389 to 22, the House approved H.R. 2647, the National Defense Authorization Act, a bill which provides \$550.4 billion for standard operations of the Department of Defense, \$2.5 billion for Energy Department national security programs, and \$130 billion for ongoing military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

I voted "yes." The Senate has not yet acted on this legislation.

Interior-Environment Appropriations: On June 26, by a vote of 254 to 173, the House approved H.R. 2996, the Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2010. This bill would provide \$32.4 billion for the Interior Department, the Environmental Protection Agency and related agencies.

I vote "no" because H.R. 2996 increased spending 17 percent above the previous year's budgeted levels and because the agencies involved have already received \$10.9 billion in supplemental appropriations from the stimulus bill approved earlier this year.

Cap-and-Trade: As discussed at the top of this newsletter, on June 26 the House approved H.R. 2454, the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009. I voted "no" for the reasons already given. The Senate has not yet considered its version of the bill.

Agriculture Appropriations: On July 9, by a vote of 266 to 160, the House approved H.R. 2997, the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Appropriations Act.

I voted "no" because H.R. 2997 increases funding for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration operations by \$2.436 billion or 11.9 percent above the discretionary spending level for Fiscal Year 2009.

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