



Rep. Petri's E-Newsletter November 16, 2010

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The New Republican House

Some races have yet to be called, but with a gain of at least 60 seats, the Republicans are set to control the House of Representatives by about 239 to 190. What are we going to do with it? Here's the official plan for the House of Representatives as detailed by the new majority leadership:

We will vote to end business uncertainty and create incentives for job growth with a plan to permanently stop all job-killing tax hikes and by giving small businesses a tax deduction equal to 20 percent of their business income.

We will vote to establish regulatory certainty by reining in the red tape factory in Washington, D.C. and requiring Congress to decide about any new regulation that would harm job creation or the economy. Job-killing small business mandates like the new 1099 paperwork rules must be made a thing of the past.

We will vote to put government on a path to a balanced budget and pay down the debt by acting immediately to cancel unspent stimulus funds, by cutting government spending to pre-stimulus, pre-bailout levels, by establishing a hard cap on new discretionary spending, by cutting Congress' budget, and by holding weekly votes on spending cuts.

We will vote to end government control of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, impose a net federal hiring freeze on non-security employees, root out government waste and sunset outdated and duplicative programs.

We will fight to repeal the job-killing health care law and replace it with a plan to enact medical liability reform, grant consumers the freedom to purchase coverage across state lines, expand Health Savings Accounts, and strengthen the doctor-patient relationship. We will support access for those with pre-existing conditions and permanently prohibit taxpayer funding of abortion.

Of course, for those initiatives to go into effect we will need the cooperation of the Senate and the President. The House, however, has complete control over its own procedures so we can promptly guarantee these reforms to make our work more open and honest:

We will reform the budget process in the House to focus on long-term challenges.

We will require legislation to be publicly available for at least three days before voting on it.

We will adhere to the Constitution and require every bill to cite its specific Constitutional Authority.

We will ensure an open and bipartisan debate on all spending bills.

And we will advance legislative issues one at a time and end the practice of massive bills that address unrelated issues.

What's Coming Up In Congress

The House started a lame duck session November 15. This is an opportunity for the current Congress to finish up overdue business. It's the last chance for Speaker Pelosi and the current majority to attempt to pass certain of their high priority bills before turning the House over to the new Republican majority in January.

What's on tap?

Congress has passed a stopgap spending bill which will keep the government funded until the beginning of December. The lame duck session will need to approve a new spending bill to keep the lights on.

The Bush tax cuts expire at the end of the year. The lame duck session may extend some or all of the tax cuts. Failing that, I would expect the new Republican-led House to extend the tax cuts early next year, and surely the Senate will do the same. The sticking point is whether or not to extend that portion of the tax cuts which benefit "the rich." Republicans and some Democrats say that a period of slow growth is an especially bad time to raise taxes on anybody, including small business owners and investors. President Obama and most Democrats disagree.

We may again extend federal unemployment benefits. Republicans are calling for savings elsewhere in the budget to cover the cost.

Medicare payments for doctors' tests, operations and appointments are scheduled to drop by 23 percent at the start of December. If this is not prevented, many doctors may stop taking Medicare patients.

The Democrats are also considering taking up a major child nutrition bill, legislation to provide permanent resident status for illegal immigrants who were brought into the country before their 16th birthday and attend college or serve in the military, and a \$250 payment to Social Security recipients to compensate for the lack of a cost of living increase for the coming year.

The House has already approved a major food safety bill. If the Senate takes it up, we may be asked to vote on any Senate amendments. Also, there is some talk, as part of a defense authorization bill, of repealing the "Don't Ask Don't Tell" policy to allow gays to serve openly in the military.

I may have the opportunity to bring up a bill to make it clear that schools participating in the school lunch program are legally allowed to donate excess food to local food banks. My proposal was approved by the Education and Labor Committee in July as an amendment to a larger child nutrition bill, but that larger bill is stalled in the House.

Mail Processing Meeting

I want to make sure that commercial mailers and others in the zip code Area beginning with 549 are aware of a meeting the U.S. Postal Service has scheduled to discuss proposals to consolidate the mail processing operations currently performed at the Oshkosh Processing and Distribution Center with those performed by the Green Bay P&DC.

All public input at this meeting will be taken into consideration when the USPS makes its final decision, so please take this opportunity to learn how this consolidation would affect local businesses and to ask questions and share concerns.

The meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 23, at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh in the Reeve Memorial Union, Room 227 AB, 748 Algoma Boulevard, Oshkosh, WI, at 7 p.m.

If you are unable to attend the meeting but would still like to share your concerns, you may send written comments to:

MANAGER CONSUMER AFFAIRS
LAKELAND DISTRICT
PO BOX 5011

MILWAUKEE, WI 53201-5011

All comments must be postmarked by December 8, 2010, in order for them to be considered in the final decision.

What I've Been Up To

With Congress out of session, I spent most of the past month visiting groups and businesses around the 6th Congressional District. Highlights included the Manitowoc County Chamber of Commerce Business Summit and Expo, a meeting with American Government students at Mishicot High School, the inauguration of Dr. Steven DiSalvo as the 14th president of Marian University, the groundbreaking ceremony for new hangar construction at the Manitowoc airport and visits at Ottery Transportation in Armstrong and the Project Youth program in Sheboygan.

I spent November 3 showing Japanese Ambassador Ichiro Fujisaki around the Manitowoc and Sheboygan areas. The visit included a stop at Lincoln High School in Manitowoc where 87 students are participating in the school's Japanese program, lunch with representatives from Orion Energy Systems and representatives of the Manitowoc International Relations Association at Orion in Manitowoc, and a reception for the Ambassador at Lakeland College. The Ambassador addressed the Economic Club of Sheboygan in the evening.

I spoke at the annual legislative update meeting of the Oshkosh Area Society for Human Resource Management, visited ImproMed, Inc. of Oshkosh, stopped in at some downtown Oshkosh businesses, toured the Oshkosh Defense E-Coat Facility and attended a retirement reception for Bill Welch, longtime president and CEO of the Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce.

For Veterans Day I participated in the Reedsville AMVETS Post 1032 Veterans Day program at Reedsville Elementary/Middle School, and was the featured speaker at the Veterans Day program at UW Fond du Lac, sponsored by the school's Veterans Club, and then had lunch with club members.

Medicare Part D Meetings

Medicare recipients: mark you calendars. I have scheduled a series of public meetings on Medicare Part D for Thursday, December 9, and Friday, December 10. This will be an opportunity to explore your options for prescription drug coverage. A representative from the Board On Aging and Long Term Care will present Medicare Part D information.

The details follow:

Thursday, December 9:

Sheboygan

10 am-11:30

UW Sheboygan Campus

One University Drive

The Wombat Room

Manitowoc

1:30 pm-3:00

Manitowoc Senior Center

3333 Custer Street

Friday, December 10:

Montello

9:30-11:00 am

Montello Senior Center

140 Lake Court

Oshkosh

1:00-2:30 pm

Oshkosh Senior Center

200 N. Campbell Road

Willow Rooms

Fond du Lac

3:30-5-00 pm

UW Fond du Lac

400 University Drive

Room UC113-114

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