



Rep. Petri's E-Newsletter September 15, 2010

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How They Explain It

Back in 1994, when the Democrats lost control of the House for the first time in 40 years, ABC news anchor Peter Jennings sought to explain this inexplicable event. "The voters had a temper tantrum last week," he said.

The pundits are at it again. They figure the current Congress has done all sorts of great things for the country - passed a \$787 billion stimulus plan that yielded a 9.6 percent unemployment rate and 1.6 percent economic growth in the second quarter; approved a trillion-dollar national health care plan which puts the government in charge of 1/6th of the U.S. economy; paid for it, in part, by cutting \$500 billion out of Medicare; approved (in the House) a climate change plan which, in January 2008, candidate Obama had noted would cause electricity rates to "skyrocket," and much, much more. (I fought against each of those initiatives.)

With what they see as terrific accomplishments, liberal commentators are at a loss to explain why the country seems so ungrateful. But they try.

According to *New York Times* columnist Maureen Dowd, "Obama is the head of the dysfunctional family of America - a rational man running a most irrational nation..." *Slate's* Jacob Weisberg blames the "childishness, ignorance, and growing incoherence of the public at large." The *Washington Post's* Eugene Robinson says "Americans are in a mood to hold their breath until they turn blue.... It's a temper tantrum."

There is plenty to be mad about, but public anger crystallized during the health care debate. A solid majority of the public made it quite clear that they thought "ObamaCare" was a monumental, life-or-death mistake, but the President and his allies rammed it through with the argument that the public will learn to love it.

It was arrogance squared. Supporters of ObamaCare, both in the media and in Congress, thought they knew better than the people what is good for them. It naturally follows that some of them equate resistance with childishness.

To use an overused phrase: "They just don't get it." Our republic is supposed to function with the consent of the governed. Congress needs to get back in the habit of listening to our citizens.

Academy Day

On Saturday, September 25, from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. I will be one of the hosts of an Academy Day. Students interested in attending the U.S. military academies are invited to attend, as are their parents and guidance counselors.

Academy Day will take place at the Experimental Aircraft Association's Aviation Center at 3000 Poberezny Road, Oshkosh, WI.

Coming Up In Congress

The House is officially scheduled to be in session for only 16 days over four weeks in September and October. There are reports, however, that House and Senate Democratic leaders are considering adjourning a week earlier in order to allow their members more time in their home districts.

That won't leave much time to consider the President's recent proposal for \$180 billion in expanded business tax cuts and infrastructure spending - especially when you consider that Congress has yet to complete work on any of the 12 huge appropriations bills which fund the federal government's discretionary spending. A short-term "continuing resolution" to keep the government functioning will necessarily be passed until a long-term solution is considered, likely in a lame duck session after November 2nd.

Congress has yet to decide whether or how to extend the Bush tax cuts or let them expire at the end of the year. Most Republicans and many Democrats think it would be unwise to allow anybody's taxes to go up during economic hard times, noting that higher taxes on "the rich" will harm small businesses and kill jobs. But President Obama disagrees. Everybody assumes that most of the Bush tax cuts will be extended, but there is no agreement as to how it should be done. It is possible this may be considered in a lame duck session.

The House and Senate have both passed bills to reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration, but negotiations between the two chambers have not been finished.

The House has passed its Department of Defense authorization for 2011, and the Senate may consider it in the weeks ahead.

Republicans are wary that a lame duck session would provide an opportunity for the current congressional leadership to ram through controversial bills with the nothing-to-lose support of members who won't be back for the next Congress in January. So far, this is all just speculation.

What I've Been Up To

The House was out of session through most of August and early September, and I spent most of my time traveling around the 6th Congressional District meeting with people.

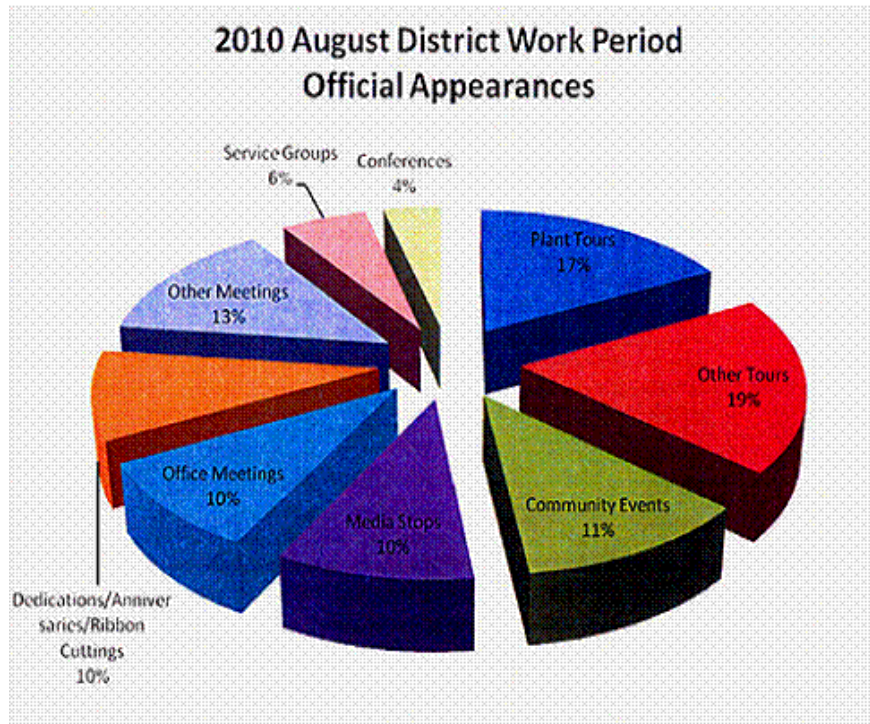
I also hosted two conferences in August. **The Government Grants and Programs Conference**, held at Lakeshore Technical College in Cleveland, helped connect local government leaders and non-profit organizations with many community, state, and federal resources that they otherwise may not have known about.

Those who attended were particularly pleased with the grant writing sessions that were offered. They also enjoyed the opportunity to hear from those who have been successful leveraging various programs to effectively meet local needs. The City of Two Rivers, for example, was highlighted in one of our sessions as an excellent case study of a community that has left no stone unturned in accessing government and private sources of assistance to enhance the local economy and quality of life.

The Small Business Assistance Conference at Moraine Park Technical College in Fond du Lac was particularly helpful for those interested in starting a new business or expanding an existing business. We all know that small business growth and development is the engine that will pull us through the current economic downturn. For that reason, it is important for our entrepreneurs to know what kinds of programs are available to provide the capital they need to start or grow their businesses.

Also, I met with people from two anti-poverty organizations, **Project Promise** in Menasha and **ADVOCAP** in Fond du Lac, to discuss my efforts to reform tax and welfare policies which discourage work and marriage.

During the 2010 District Work Period I participated in numerous official activities throughout the 6th District. The chart below will give you an idea of how my time was spent:



On My Schedule

In addition to the Academy Day noted above, on September 16 I will testify before the International Trade Commission in support of Wisconsin paper manufacturers and their employees, and against Chinese and Indonesian dumping of subsidized paper exports to the U.S. Also the same day I will participate in an Aviation Subcommittee hearing on the Federal Aviation Administration's proposed rule regulating how many hours flight crews can be on duty and how much rest they need.

I plan to attend a Welcome Home event for all Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom service members on October 2.

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