



Congressman

Wally Herger

Reports from Washington

109th Congress - First Session

Volume One

Dear Friends:

The 109th Congress is getting off to a fast start, and while the legislative landscape has changed slightly, our national priorities remain the same - continued economic growth, strengthening homeland security and fighting the war on terrorism, just to name a few. As we consider these important issues, I want to thank you for sharing your thoughts and concerns. Your feedback is invaluable as I seek to be your voice - and the voice of all northern Californians - in Washington.

In the past two years, Congress has actively worked to address many of these pressing issues. We have approved the most sweeping modernization of Medicare since the program's creation, strengthened our intelligence gathering services, bolstered our war fighters, reduced income taxes for all Americans, increased veteran spending, and reaffirmed Congress' commitment to the institution of marriage. Still, there is much more work to be done.

America has truly come far since September 11, 2001. Our economic recovery has been perhaps the most exciting development. Since August 2003 our nation has experienced positive economic growth and job gains, recovering jobs lost as a result of the terrorist attacks and a recession. President Bush's and Congress' tax relief and jobs growth initiatives have fostered business expansion and job creation, and have successfully laid the groundwork for long-term prosperity. In the coming months, Congress will consider several significant reforms in an effort to further foster economic growth, including strengthening Social Security and fundamental tax reform.

In the war on terrorism, our victories have significantly improved world security. Notwith-

standing challenges, we are working to improve the situation in the newly democratic nation of Iraq thanks to the determination and sacrifice of our military men and women, working alongside the nearly 250,000 Iraqi Security Forces. In September, I had an opportunity to travel

to Iraq, and witnessed first hand the outstanding job our troops are doing to make the lives of the Iraqi people better, safer, and more free. In Iran and North Korea, we continue to work to reduce the threat of nuclear proliferation by these rogue regimes. As a result of our operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, we are dismantling terrorist networks around the world. As freedom takes hold in Iraq, as happened in Afghanistan, terrorists will no longer be able to use the country as a base for operations.

At home, we need to continue to focus on increasing statewide water storage and provide flood protection, to meet community needs and prevent shortages. As the national Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process moves forward in 2005, we must continue to promote the contributions of Beale Air Force Base to our modern, joint forces military.

Enclosed you will find my 2005 Congressional Questionnaire. I hope you will take a moment to complete this and return it to me. Please feel free to visit my web site on the Internet - <http://www.house.gov/herger/> - to learn more about the legislative issues important to you!



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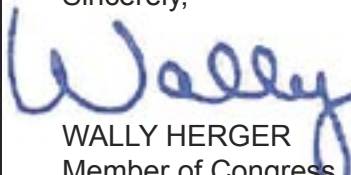
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Sincerely,


WALLY HERGER
Member of Congress

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Iraq: What I Saw

In September 2004, I traveled with our military and other congressmen to Iraq, Jordan and Germany for five days, in the time leading up to both Iraqi elections. All along, President George W. Bush and Interim Iraqi Prime Minister Ayad Allawi had acknowledged that the road to elections would be difficult. Accordingly, terrorists and Saddam regime holdouts increased attacks in the months before the elections. The reason for this was clear - an increasingly peaceful, free and secure Iraq poses a threat to their power structure and extremist ideology.

The situation was much the same in Afghanistan, where the previous radical Taliban regime, out of political convenience, allowed al Qaeda to base its terrorist operations in their country. Now that the Taliban is gone, forcibly removed by a coalition of free nations in 2001, the people of Afghanistan are rebuilding their society. Recently, for the first time in the country's history, citizens elected a president. These images send a powerful message to terrorists, and it's one they don't like.

With the help of soldiers from a coalition of nations, America will continue to assist the establishment of peace and democracy in Iraq. In just under two years' time, the Iraqi people have made great strides, rebuilding and overcoming their nightmare 30-year history of oppression and genocide under Saddam Hussein's brutal regime. To transition a nation from the grips of a generation-old tyranny to a free country is difficult work to say the least. But we are making progress in Iraq. In the buildup to elections in Iraq, our soldiers have been prepared for increased violence.

For the first time, Iraqi citizens are experiencing what it is to participate in a free society. In Iraq, elections offer the promise of representation, civil rights and an end to tyranny. However, its elections will no doubt evolve over time, as the country becomes safer and more stable.

While in Iraq, I had the opportunity to speak with many of our soldiers - from privates on up to three-star General Casey - and saw first hand how operations are progressing in the burgeoning Iraqi civil society. The attitude of the soldiers on the ground is extremely positive, illustrating a steadfast determination to get the job done. Signs of their good work were all around us as hospitals and schools are built, and critical infrastructure, such as roads, sewage lines and power grids are under construction.

It was an honor to travel to Iraq and meet with soldiers and representatives of the new Iraqi government. I was so impressed with the outstanding young people serving in our armed forces. They helped me gain a more profound respect for our mission in Iraq, and renewed my belief that through their actions we are making the world a better place.



Congressman Herger speaks with Weaverville resident Barbara Tavola during a recent visit. Herger praised Barbara for her longtime work to encourage citizens to exercise their right to

Legislative Outlook

109th Congress

STRENGTHENING SOCIAL SECURITY - The House and Senate will work with the Administration to strengthen Social Security for all Americans by allowing younger workers to invest a portion in personal savings accounts, while preserving benefits for existing recipients.

TAX SIMPLIFICATION - In addition to tax relief for all Americans, Congress will consider proposals to fundamentally reform and simplify our tax code. Several plans may be considered, including a flat tax (the same tax rate for all taxpayers) and a national sales tax (no income taxes, but a tax on purchases).

IMMIGRATION REFORM - As a member of the House Immigration Reform Caucus, I am working with others to address illegal immigration. Any plan should include elements to increase border control and reduce illegal immigration, revise the visiting worker system, and prohibit states from issuing drivers' licenses to illegal aliens.

BUDGET REFORM - I will continue to work along with other fiscal conservatives in the House to hold back runaway spending in the budget and appropriations process.

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT IMPROVEMENTS - Updating the ESA will be a major priority in the 109th Congress. Together with Resources Chairman Richard Pombo and other western representatives, we will work to bring common sense and balance to this well-intentioned but inflexible law, the primary federal law regarding threatened and endangered species.

Congressman Herger is briefed on the status of military operations by U.S. soldiers during his September 2004 trip to Iraq.

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Time to Get Moving on Judicial Nominations

"Every judicial nominee should receive an up-or-down vote in the full Senate, no matter who is President or which party controls the Senate. It is time ... to do what is right for the American legal system and the American people."

—President George W. Bush, August 1, 2003

It is time for the Senate minority to allow the judicial confirmation process to move forward.

As of July 2004, President Bush had nominated individuals to federal courts who all share the qualities of outstanding legal qualifications, sound character, and prudent judgment. Of the nominees who have been rated by the American Bar Association, 98% have been rated either well-qualified or qualified.

However, the judicial confirmation process has been obstructed by a parliamentary procedure known

as a filibuster. Six of the President's appeals court nominees - favorably reviewed by the Senate Judiciary Committee - have been denied final up-or-down votes, even though they would likely be confirmed if the full Senate had the opportunity to simply vote.

Delaying judicial nominations harms our judicial system, blocking the confirmation of judicial nominees at a time when filings in the federal courts are at an all-time high. The result is a further burdened legal system. In fact, an astounding one-third of the President's 25 pending judicial nominees are waiting to fill seats that have been designated judicial emergencies. On the state and local level, more appeals court nominees have had to wait over a year for a confirmation hearing than in the last 50 years combined.

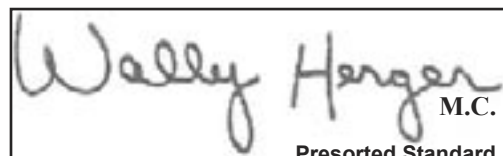
Because this problem lies in the Senate, there is no legislative action the House of Representatives can take to rectify this situation. While recent changes in the Senate may result in a more favorable environment for confirmations, nothing is certain. The courts are in dire need of appointment confirmations and judges to fill vacancies. In the coming months, we will again have an opportunity to fix the broken judicial



Congressman Herger recently visited with High School students in Burney. He spoke to the group about education as the key to success and opening a world of possibilities.

Congressman
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Official Business



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2005 Congressional Questionnaire