



Congressman

Gene Green

Reports

29th Congressional District of Texas

Winter 2007

Dear Friend,

This is our fourth newsletter for this year. Congress has been in session and voted more in 2007 than in any other session in Congressional history. I still come home every weekend, but votes in Congress are important and I'm proud of my 97.2 percent attendance record. Members of Congress have two jobs – to be in Washington to vote and also be at home to listen to our constituents. That's why we schedule many town hall and district meetings that you are welcome to attend.

The work product for all these days the House of Representatives was in session includes: 1) the first increase in minimum wage in 10 years, 2) passing the 9/11 Commission's recommendations to protect America, 3) passing the largest college financial aid expansion since the GI Bill in 1944, 4) passing the largest veterans' health care funding increase in history, 5) an innovation agenda promoting jobs for the 21st Century, 6) passing guidelines or time tables for our troops' presence in Iraq, and many other issues discussed in this newsletter.

My town hall meetings and paying for college workshops are held at different locations throughout our district. You and your family are welcome to attend one or all of these events. You do not have to attend a town hall meeting to contact me. You can call any of our three district offices or contact us through the Web site listed below.

It is an honor to serve you in Congress, and I hope you and your family have a safe and prosperous new year.

Sincerely,

Gene Green
Member of Congress

Town Hall Meetings

January 2 – Wednesday, 6:30 p.m.
Aldine YOUTH Community Center
4700 Aldine Mail Route, Houston

January 3 – Thursday, 7:00 p.m.
In conjunction with
The Songwood Civic Club
Greater Vision Church
615 Westshire Dr., Houston

January 5 – Saturday, 9:00 a.m.
South Houston Community Building
1007 State Street, South Houston

January 5 - Saturday, 11:00 a.m.
Baytown City Hall
2401 Market Street, Baytown

January 7 – Monday, 7:00 p.m.
In conjunction with
The Eastwood Civic Association
E.B. Cape Center
4501 Leeland, Houston

January 8 – Tuesday, 6:00 p.m.
Janowski Elementary School
7500 Bauman, Houston

Senior Citizens Issues Forum
January 9 – Wednesday, 10:00 a.m.
Leon Grayson Comm. Center
13828 Corpus Christi St., Houston

January 14 – Monday, 7:30 p.m.
In conjunction with
The Pecan Park Civic Assn.
Ingrando Park Comm. Center
7302 Keller, Houston

January 22 – Tuesday, 6:00 p.m.
San Jacinto College North
Fine Arts Theater
5800 Uvalde Rd., Houston

Sallie Mae Fund Paying for College Workshop

Wednesday, January 9 / 7:00 p.m.

Stephen F. Austin High School
1700 Dumble Street / Houston, TX 77023

Congressman Green hosts a tutorial that shows parents and students how they can access money for college through federal loans, grants and scholarships.

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www.house.gov/green/

Health Care Dominates Federal Agenda

Health care is at the top of both the congressional agenda and our office's legislative agenda. Below is an update on our efforts to improve health care in our country and our community.

SCHIP: Congress' top health care priority has been the reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). Despite the program's success since its creation in 1997, the state flexibility inherent in the program has allowed the Texas State Legislature to drop more than 175,000 from the enrollment rolls. Nationwide, approximately 6 million uninsured children are eligible for SCHIP but remain un-enrolled.

The President has vetoed the SCHIP reauthorization bill to extend coverage to an additional 4 million low-income, uninsured children, which would have brought total enrollment to 10 million American children. Thus far, Congress has been unable to override the President's veto; however, Congress continues to work to develop a compromise that will garner enough support to override a presidential veto while also ensuring coverage to 10 million low-income children.

HEALTH CENTERS: The Health Subcommittee has begun consideration of a Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) bill we wrote to reauthorize the Health Centers program. The program provides access to high quality health care in communities where there aren't many medical facilities.

These health centers are a critical part of America's health care safety net, helping 16 million people nationwide who might not otherwise have access to a doctor. We have worked locally to secure public and private funding for Harris County health centers, and to increase the number of centers and the quality of service. FQHCs operating in our district include: the Denver Harbor Health Center, the Pasadena Health Center, Gulfgate Clinic and El Centro de Corazon.

CHILDREN'S VISION: The House recently passed the Vision Care for Kids Act, legislation we authored to provide necessary follow-up eye exams and treatment for uninsured children who have been identified through screenings as being at high-risk for vision disorders. The bill is designed to spend scarce health care dollars in the wisest manner possible by placing priority on children under the age of nine. The bill awaits action by the Senate, after which it will be sent to the President for his signature.

TRAUMA CARE: In May, the President signed the Trauma Care Systems Planning and Development Act, legislation I introduced to reauthorize the federal grant program to integrate and coordinate regional trauma care. The coordination of trauma and emergency medical care is vital to response efforts in the face of natural disasters, terrorist threats and chemical spills, in addition to the everyday accidents that clog hospitals around the country.

2008 MEDICARE PART B PREMIUM: On January 1, 2008, monthly premiums for Medicare Part B will increase to \$96.40, a \$2.90 increase from monthly premiums Medicare Part B beneficiaries paid in 2007. This 3.1 percent increase is the smallest percentage increase in the Part B premium since 2001.

SOCIAL SECURITY: The cost-of-living adjustment for Social Security beneficiaries will result in a 2.3 percent increase in benefits.



In September, British Member of Parliament Alasdair McDonnell (left) accompanied Rep. Green (second from left) to the Denver Harbor Health Clinic, where they discussed Federally Qualified Health Centers with the clinic's CEO Daniel Montez (second from right) and Chief Medical Officer Donald Briscoe (right).

FLU SHOTS: With the cold and flu season upon us, individuals who wish to reduce their risk of becoming ill with the flu should consider getting a flu shot. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends the flu shot for the following groups of people: all children aged 6 months to 4 years; all individuals over the age of 50; women who will be pregnant during the flu season; health care personnel; and adults and children with compromised immune systems. The Harris County Hospital District provides affordable flu shots at \$5 for adults and \$3 for children, subject to availability. For more information, or an appointment, call 713-526-4243.

TUBERCULOSIS: The recent news stories about the public health problems posed by drug resistant tuberculosis highlight the need for a renewed federal commitment to preventing and treating this disease. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, the U.S. experienced a re-emergence of TB that public health experts have attributed in part to federal funding reductions. We should learn from this experience to prevent another re-emergence of this infectious disease, which is why I have introduced the Comprehensive TB Elimination Act (H.R.1532). This legislation will give the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) authority to respond to international outbreaks of XDR-TB and increase funds for the Center's National Program for the Elimination of Tuberculosis. It will expand research on TB diagnostic and treatment tools at the National Institutes of Health and CDC so that we may have new tools to combat the disease.

Senior Citizens Issues Forum

Wednesday, January 9 / 10:00 a.m.

Leon Grayson Community Center

Baldree Building

13828 Corpus Christi St.

Houston, TX 77015

Bring your questions and concerns about issues that affect senior citizens, such as Social Security and Medicare, to a special forum hosted by Congressman Green.

National Energy Policy Affects Harris County

With the release of the latest International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, there is clear scientific consensus that human activities, particularly the burning of fossil fuels, have increased emissions of atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other trace greenhouse gases which contribute to global warming. Congress is devoting a significant amount of time this year to developing the best policy response to this serious situation. There is also growing momentum in the business community to address this issue with government action.

The policy debate surrounding global climate change creates difficult challenges for Congress. While fossil-fuel combustion is the primary source of CO₂ emissions, the U.S. economy is heavily dependent on the energy derived from these fossil fuels. Nowhere is this more evident than in Houston, where refineries, chemical plants and pipelines play an important role in the local economy and way of life.

The Energy and Commerce Committee on which I serve has held hearings throughout the year examining climate change and how best to craft climate change legislation. Several proposals are currently being debated: a nationwide “cap and trade system,” which sets a maximum allowable amount of greenhouse gas emissions; or a carbon tax which sets the maximum unit cost, per ton of CO₂ equivalent, that one should pay for reducing emissions.

I believe we must acknowledge the effects of global warming and formulate effective climate change policies that balance our economic interests with the environmental realities we face. I will continue to examine all legislative proposals to carefully craft a bill that ensures a minimum of disruption to our economy and to low and middle-income Americans who will bear the highest burden of higher energy costs as a result of any mandatory carbon limits.

The United States must also invest in technology to reduce such costs and lower our carbon dioxide emissions. I have supported several bills that would increase financial incentives to produce energy from wind, solar, biomass, geothermal, and other sources. I will continue to support programs and projects seeking to create cleaner energy technologies because we all benefit from a cleaner environment.

Do-Not-Call List Renewal

Since the creation of the do-not-call list, 145 million numbers have been added to the list. There have been recent news stories regarding the government’s do-not-call list ending, as the creation of the original list had a five-year expiration.

The Federal Trade Commission, which administers the program, has announced it will not drop any telephone numbers from the National Do Not Call Registry based on a five-year expiration period pending final congressional or agency action on whether to make registration permanent. I have cosponsored and supported legislation that is currently moving through the House of Representatives to make the Registry permanent. This popular and successful government program should be made permanent to ensure consumers are protected from unwanted, unsolicited telephone calls. For more information or to register your phone number, go to www.donotcall.gov or call 1-888-382-1222 (TTY 1-866-290-4236).

College Cost Reduction Act

The College Cost Reduction and Access Act became law in September. This bill will provide the single largest investment in higher education since the GI Bill of 1944.

Each year, over 200,000 Texans take out need-based student financial aid loans. With this bill, these students will see their interest rates halved over the next four years as well as an increase in the popular Pell Grant to \$5040 by 2012. This legislation is an investment in our economy, as more college students will graduate with a lower debt burden enabling them to buy homes, invest, and fuel our economy. We sponsor “Paying for College” workshops twice a year. Our next one is scheduled for Wednesday, January 9, 2008, at 7 p.m. at Austin High School, 1700 Dumble, Houston.

Flood Insurance Reformed

Major floods have caused damage to thousands of Harris County homes and businesses. Unfortunately, not all property owners can afford to purchase flood insurance.

When the House approved legislation in September to reform the national flood insurance program (H.R. 3121), I offered an amendment to help low-income families purchase critical flood insurance for their homes. The amendment provides for a five year phase-in of flood insurance premiums for low-income homeowners or renters whose primary residence is placed within a flood plain through an updating of flood insurance program maps.

This amendment, approved by the House, will make the flood program more affordable for low-income homeowners in our District and decrease the likelihood of a taxpayer bailout in the event of a flood.

Light Rail Coming to Houston

On October 19, 2007, METRO’s Board of Directors voted to implement light rail on four lines that were previously scheduled to have Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). Our office is pleased that METRO voted to construct light rail lines rather than BRT lines because Houston voted in favor of light rail expansion not BRT expansion in 2005. The four lines that will now have light rail are the North, Southeast, East End, and Uptown lines. Construction on these lines is scheduled to begin in the spring of 2008 and lines are scheduled to begin providing service by 2012.

Digital Television

Television stations serving all markets in the United States are airing digital television programming today, although most will continue to provide analog programming through February 17, 2009. At that point, full-power television stations will cease broadcasting on their current analog channels.

Consumers who rely on antennas (including outside antennas and “rabbit ears”) to receive broadcast signals on television sets having only analog tuners will need to obtain separate digital-to-analog set-top converter boxes to watch over-the-air television. These boxes receive digital signals and convert them into analog format for display on analog televisions. Between Jan. 1, 2008, and March 31, 2009, all U.S. households will be eligible to request up to two coupons, worth \$40 each, to be used toward the purchase of up to two, digital-to-analog converter boxes. More information on the transition and the coupon program can be found at www.dtv.gov or by calling 1-888-388-2009.

Green Secures Funding for Community

The House has passed each of the fiscal year 2008 appropriations bills, several of which contain funding our office secured for organizations in our community. Each of the appropriations projects I submitted this year complied with new rules requiring each project sponsor to certify that neither the sponsoring member nor his/her spouse had any financial interest in the project. At the time of publication, most of these bills had not been signed into law; however, the following is a list of projects secured in the House-passed bills:

- \$588,000 to finish the Army Corps of Engineers study and begin construction on the Greens Bayou Federal Flood Control Project
- \$18.3 million in construction funding for the Houston Ship Channel's Navigation Channel Project, a \$2 million increase over the President's budget
- \$15.4 million in Operations and Maintenance funding for the Houston Ship Channel's Deepening and Widening Project, a \$1 million increase over the President's budget
- \$20 million for the Houston Metropolitan Transit Authority to implement rail and bus rapid transit
- \$225,000 for Gateway to Care's Health Center Health Information Technology Program
- \$415,000 for the Harris County Hospital District's diabetes program.
- \$250,000 for the YMCA of Greater Houston's Juvenile Justice Outreach Program
- \$1.9 million for the Harris County Sheriffs Office's Integrated In-Car Mobile Technology Project
- \$389,000 for the Texas Hydrogen Highway Project, to extend the existing hydrogen pipeline system to the City of Houston
- \$100,000 for the Harris County Community and Economic Development Department to study transit improvement needs in our community
- \$2.4 million for the University of Houston's Consortium for Nanomaterials for Aerospace Commerce and Technology (CONTACT) to enable research, development and technology transfer on behalf of the U.S. Air Force

A full list of funding requests is available online at:
www.house.gov/list/press/tx29_green/20070614.html

New Buffalo Bayou Heritage Area Proposal

In September, the National Park Service held public meetings in La Porte, Jacinto City, and Houston on the potential designation of Buffalo Bayou, the Port of Houston and the surrounding energy sector as a National Heritage Area. The purpose of these meetings was to gather input from communities and identify issues that should be included in the National Heritage Area Study the National Park Service is conducting on Buffalo Bayou. A National Heritage Area is a locally-managed designation that focuses heritage-centered interpretation, conservation and development projects. The Heritage Area's initiatives are coordinated by a local entity in partnership with stakeholders that work together on projects that meet management plan goals. Public comments on National Heritage Area Study can be emailed to John Paige of the National Park Service at John_Paige@nps.gov or mailed:

John Paige
Intermountain Region
National Park Service
12795 West Alameda Parkway
Denver, CO 80225-0287



Congressman Green discusses the importance of reading with first graders at Scroggins Elementary in Houston during the fall 2007 semester. He also discussed Head Start and other education programs with faculty and staff.

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Official Business



John Green
M.C.

Presorted Standard
W/S Carrier Route

Si le gustaría recibir una copia de este noticiero en español, hágame el favor de escribirme a 256 N.Sam Houston Pkwy. E, Ste. 29, Houston, TX 77060. Si es más fácil, también puede llamar a nuestra oficina para recibir el noticiero al 281-999-5879.

This mailing was prepared, published, and mailed at taxpayer expense.