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To: Koch, Anna;
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Thank you for reading The Conaway Chronicle, a weekly review of my activities in Congress. This newsletter is to let you know what's going on in Washington and what important issues are being debated in Congress.

General Petraeus becomes Commander Petraeus

Last week, President Bush nominated General David Petraeus, who is currently serving as the head General in Iraq, to take over Central Command. Central Command is a command based out of Tampa, Florida whose overall responsibility is to oversee the fights in Iraq and Afghanistan. Petraeus will be replaced by General Ray Odierno, who is currently in Iraq and was slated to become vice chief of the Army before being asked by President Bush to take over as head General in Iraq.

These men are two wonderful leaders who love our country and have spent a significant part of their lives away from family and friends in defense of our country and our freedoms. I appreciate their willingness to serve our nation through the fight against the radical Islamic jihadists who seek to threaten our way of life.

Economic Stimulus Checks in the Mail

Starting next Monday, checks will begin to be deposited electronically into taxpayers' accounts as a result of the bipartisan economic stimulus package passed by Congress in February. Paper checks will be mailed to taxpayers who do not use direct deposit beginning in a few weeks.

While the economy in West Texas remains strong and the unemployment rate remains low, the economy of the nation as a whole is gradually slowing. Gas prices are rising by the day, housing values are plummeting, and small businesses across the country are feeling the pain of the slowing economy. By giving hardworking Americans money that is already theirs in the form of tax rebates, the economy will receive a temporary boost and I am hopeful that Americans will feel less of a blow by high prices. While I am pleased that my colleagues were able to work with the President in a bipartisan manner to form this plan, more than just a tax rebate is expected from the federal government to help boost our economy. We must make the current tax rates permanent and employ other forms of real tax reform to solve our current economic situation.

Farm Bill Update

Last week the President signed into law another short-term extension of current farm law as it was passed by both the House and Senate. This one-week extension, which runs through May 2nd, is meant to give Farm Bill conferees additional time to complete a bill. It appears that some progress was made over the weekend towards reaching the goal of completing a Farm Bill, however several hurdles still remain, including issues regarding dairy programs, direct payments and payment limitations. While this progress is encouraging, we must make sure that the goal of completing and passing a new Farm Bill doesn't rest unevenly on the shoulders of America's producers. It is my hope that a fair and balanced Farm Bill will emerge from ongoing conference negotiations that I can be proud to support. I have often stated that our nation's farmers have, and will continue to provide, American consumers with the most affordable, abundant and safest food supply in t! he world. Congress should continue work to enact policies that reflect such priorities.

** Click here to see which bills I co-sponsored last week in Washington**

The Conaway Chronicle will be issued every week when Congress is in session. I hope that you will find it informative and will continue to stay informed with my recent legislative activities in Washington. In the meantime, if you have any questions, concerns or suggestions for future issues of the Conaway Chronicle, please visit the website at **www.house.gov/conaway** or don't hesitate to call me at (202) 225-3605. Check out my blog at **www.conawayblog.com**!

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