



Congressman Wally Herger



Reports from Washington

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Dear Friends:

This year we suffered some of the worst natural disasters in our nation's history. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita unleashed immense damage on the Gulf Coast, and hundreds of thousands of our fellow citizens were displaced from their homes. In response to these devastating storms, millions of our nation's compassionate citizens, including many from Northern California, opened their homes and wallets to help those in need. Congress and the president also acted quickly to help fund relief and recovery efforts in the affected areas. These heavy costs highlighted the need for continued fiscal restraint, and Congress has taken bold steps to limit spending to ensure the continued financial stability of our nation.

Our nation's economy suffered a blow from these natural disasters, but it once again has demonstrated great resiliency. Our economy continues to grow, and, since March 2003, over 4 million new jobs have been created, the unemployment rate has fallen to 5.0%, and our investment markets have grown stronger. Increased tax revenue generated by a growing economy has helped to bring down the deficit, and interest rates remain relatively low. Put simply, our economy remains on firm footing, and all signs indicate continued economic and job growth in the future.

Overseas, Afghanistan and Iraq have experienced free elections and the ratification of democratic constitutions, thereby dealing a heavy blow to the agenda of terrorists, and laying the foundation for peace and greater security for America. As in every military conflict, selfless American servicemen and women have made great sacrifices during our military engagements in Afghanistan

and Iraq, and our nation will always be grateful for their service. Their commitment has made America safer, and the only way to ensure that their sacrifices are not in vain is to complete and win these critical battles in the War on Terrorism.



As we approach a new year and the next session of Congress, I will continue to actively support strong immigration enforcement laws, measures to strengthen our national defense and homeland security, common sense improvements to our environmental laws, and fiscal responsibility. As Congress continues to address these issues and others, my number one priority will be to represent the interests of Northern California. As always, I greatly appreciate your thoughts and input, which help me better represent you.

Sincerely,

Wally
WALLY HERGER
Member of Congress



Congressman Herger presents the Bronze Star and Prisoner of War medal, along with eight others, to Mr. Erving Boeger in Gridley. Mr. Boeger served our nation during World War II, and was recently notified he was entitled to these medals.

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Fiscal Challenges Require Congress to Further Tighten Its Budget Belt

As the Gulf Region recovers from the widespread devastation of natural disaster, Congress has responded with federal funding to assist relief and recovery efforts. There will also likely be additional funding commitments to help the region rebuild. These costs will be enormous.

During some of America's darkest hours, such as World War II and the Korean War, our nation has sacrificed in other areas to ensure that these challenges were met in a fiscally responsible way. I believe we must demonstrate similar fiscal restraint in the wake of this year's hurricanes.

As of this writing, Congress is in the process of considering for the first time since 1997 a package of common sense reforms to federal "mandatory" spending programs

that would yield savings of tens of billions of dollars over 5 years. Also, I'm part of a group of House members who are urging additional action to reduce annual discretionary spending through an across-the-board reduction. These critical steps would allow us to meet the costs of hurricane relief and recovery in a responsible way.

The people of Northern California know firsthand what it is like to be flooded and that the federal government has an important role in helping citizens affected by natural disasters. However, in responding, we must not saddle our children and grandchildren with additional debt or increase taxes on the American people. Sacrifices will need to be made, but we can and must meet our needs in a fiscally responsible way.

Flood Emergency Plan Essential for North State Residents

As we approach the time of year when flooding is a concern for many of our communities, it is critical that families develop an emergency plan in the event of a disaster. Being prepared and having a plan can limit losses that accompany natural disasters, and, most important, can save lives.

I encourage you to visit www.ready.gov on the Internet, which provides very useful information detailing the proper actions that should be taken before, during, and after a major disaster. Among the key information included on the website is the importance of an emergency supply kit and a family communication plan. Please visit www.ready.gov for further information.

Summer Town Halls

I want to thank the hundreds of people who were able to attend my annual town hall meetings in late August. I traveled throughout the 2nd Congressional District, and held nine town hall meetings. Among the issues most frequently discussed by constituents were immigration reform, gas prices, the ongoing efforts in Iraq, and Social Security. I appreciate your efforts to attend, and I greatly value your viewpoints, concerns, and ideas regarding these and other issues. Knowing your point of view helps me better represent the interests of Northern California.

Below, Congressman Herger addresses constituents at the town hall meeting in Colusa.



An Opportunity to Reshape the Supreme Court

Recently, President Bush exercised perhaps his greatest domestic constitutional responsibility by nominating John Roberts and Samuel Alito to the Supreme Court. Chief Justice Roberts and, if confirmed by the Senate, Justice Alito, will likely serve on the Court for many years to come, and will help determine whether the Supreme Court will follow the original meaning of our Constitution, or make laws from the bench.

In recent decades, we have seen unelected judges routinely ignore the will of the people and fail to recognize constitutional limits on government power. For example, the Supreme Court--frequently in 5-4 split decisions, and increasingly citing rulings from foreign courts to justify its decisions--has issued rulings that demonstrate a growing hostility toward religion in public life, undermine laws against convicted criminals, and allow private property to be taken simply so government could collect more tax revenue. It is absolutely critical that the era of judicial supremacy come to an end.

I commend the president for selecting two qualified individuals to serve in this enormously important capacity. Although history tells us that we cannot be certain how justices will rule until they are on the bench, I hope and expect that Chief Justice Roberts and Judge Alito will strictly apply the principles outlined in the U.S. Constitution.

Common Sense ESA Reform One Gigantic Step Closer

After years of hard work, on September 29, 2005, the House passed the "Threatened and Endangered Species Recovery Act." I strongly supported its passage.

This measure to modernize the Endangered Species Act (ESA) tightens requirements for scientific decision-making and institutes much-needed protections for private property owners. It also contains a "human health and safety" provision, which I actively worked to include. This provision, similar to legislation I have introduced in previous Congresses, requires the Secretary of the Interior to develop regulations to waive or streamline the ESA when human health, safety or property are threatened. As such, it will help ensure that the ESA does not prevent improvements to critical infrastructure, like levees, that are necessary to protect human life.

Our congressional district has been "ground zero" for many tragic events resulting from an outdated and inflexible ESA. These include the Arboga levee break of 1997, where repairs were delayed and subsequent flooding caused three people to tragically drown, and the Klamath Basin water shut-off of 2001, when about 1,200 farmers were denied irrigation water, even though the shut-off was not scientifically justified. The legislation the House passed will hopefully prevent similar tragedies.

Reforming the ESA has been a top priority of mine for years, and I'm extremely pleased the House has boldly acted to make substantial improvements. I hope the Senate will also pass this critical legislation so that needless tragedies are avoided in the future.

Medicare Prescription Drug Plan

The new Medicare prescription drug plan enrollment began **November 15, 2005, and runs through May 15, 2006**. A typical person with Medicare and no drug coverage today could see total drug costs drop by about 50%. The plan will cover both brand name and generic drugs. If you do not already have drug coverage, or are looking for better coverage, it may be worth considering. For further information, feel free to call 1-800-MEDICARE, or visit www.medicare.gov on the Internet.

Below, Congressman Herger visits with Matt Killoran of Durham and his parents, Jim and Donna, in Chico. Matt is a 2004 graduate of the US Military Academy at West Point. His brother, Pat Killoran, Jr., is a 2002 graduate of West Point as well. Pat is currently stationed in Kuwait flying Black Hawk helicopters throughout Kuwait and Iraq. Both Killorans received congressional nominations. 2LT Matt Killoran also flies Black Hawks and graduated flight training school with honors.



Above, Congressman Herger speaks with guests of the Well Ministry of Rescue at an event in Chico. Herger spoke in support of expanding legislative opportunities for faith-based programs that reunite families and put people back to work.

"Our congressional district has been 'ground zero' for many tragic events resulting from an outdated and inflexible ESA," Herger said.

Congress Responds to Rising Gas Prices

Increased prices at the pump during 2005 underscore the costly consequences of our nation's dependence on foreign sources of energy, and the need to increase refinery capacity in America.

Congress responded to these clear weaknesses in America's energy policy. In August, the president signed into law a comprehensive energy reform measure that encourages increased domestic energy production and greater conservation.

Also, the House recently passed a second energy bill that would significantly increase our refinery capacity. Our nation has not built a new refinery since 1976, and existing refineries already operate at 95% capacity. This common sense legislation will help American refineries become safer and more efficient and productive, and will allow new refineries to be built in a timelier manner. I hope the Senate will also pass this important legislation.

I supported both of these measures, because I recognize that every American is personally affected by rising fuel prices. These bills are not a perfect solution to longtime problems, and more needs to be done, including allowing further environmentally sensitive exploration in Alaska. Still, I believe that together, and in time, these measures can bolster domestic supply and thereby help make gas prices more affordable.

Real Immigration Reform: Secure Our Borders and Preserve the Rule of Law

I am greatly concerned by the chronic influx of illegal immigrants into our country. Illegal immigration has reached all-time highs in recent years, with an estimated ten to fifteen million illegal aliens currently residing in our country. Although most come to seek economic opportunities and offer their families a better way of life, many illegal immigrants engage in drug trafficking, gang violence and other crimes. Illegal immigration also costs California taxpayers over \$10 billion each year, according to a recent study. Most important, few doubt that foreign terrorists seek to illegally cross our borders and cunningly mingle with--and prepare to harm--the American people. For these reasons, it is absolutely essential that we make our borders more secure.

In recent years, our government has taken some positive steps toward addressing this profound problem. For instance, since 1995 the amount of border patrol agents has nearly tripled, and federal funding for

border patrol has tripled. I strongly supported these actions, as well as the REAL ID Act, which became law in May 2005. The REAL ID Act strengthened standards for states' issuance of driver's licenses to ensure that applicants provide legitimate documentation prior to receiving licenses or other identification cards, and expedited the completion of a security fence near San Diego, which had been delayed due to outdated environmental laws.

But, as a member of the Congressional Immigration Reform Caucus, a group of House members committed to common sense immigration reform, I believe much more needs to be done to address this enormous and growing problem. I have cosponsored and am actively supporting several pieces of legislation that would strengthen our nation's immigration policy, including a bill that would authorize governors to organize and call into service a group of able-bodied citizens to patrol our borders, and legislation that would clarify that local and state law enforcement officials are authorized to detain illegal immigrants, among other bills.

It is important to recognize that America truly is a "land of immigrants," and that in Northern California our farmers and others rely heavily on lawful temporary workers. Therefore, it is important that they have access to a carefully structured, closely monitored program, through which foreign workers can enter the country legally, work for a limited time, and then return to their homeland.

Lastly, the US should continue to take positive steps to encourage economic growth and stability in Mexico. A stronger Mexican economy, which would create better work conditions for Mexican workers, could help to discourage illegal immigration. A stable and prosperous Mexico is not only important for the many impoverished people working and living in Mexico, it is in our national interest.

It is time to secure our borders and implement common sense reforms aimed at discouraging illegal immigration. We must not allow America's laudable heritage of opportunity to justify the continuation of a dangerously porous border.

Below, Congressman Herger speaks in Shasta County with Leo Simon, Past State Commander of AMVETS, and Greg Raffa, Commander of the Leo P. Simon AMVETS Post 1996, about his support for legislative efforts to help meet the needs of veterans. Herger has worked closely with veteran organizations to bring a state veterans cemetery and a state veterans home to Northern California.



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