



# CARTER COURIER

<http://carter.house.gov>

JUNE 12, 2008

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 9

## LETTER FROM THE CONGRESSMAN

Dear Friends,

I greatly enjoyed the opportunity to spend time at home in the 31st District during the Memorial Day recess. I was fortunate to attend numerous events in honor of our brave soldiers across the district, including a trip to Fort Hood where I joined military spouses to formally introduce the Military Spouses Residency Relief Act.

Over the past weeks, Republicans in Congress have been focusing on a plan to bring down the skyrocketing gas prices. We have offered common-sense solutions that will help drive down the cost at the pump. Unfortunately, Democrats have yet to allow this plan to come to fruition. My hope is they will put politics aside and work with Republicans to bring relief to the American people.

As always, I thank all of you in the 31st District for the opportunity to serve you in Congress. I look forward to advancing the conservative principles that make Central Texas so great. God Bless Texas!

Until next week,



## HEALING THE INVISIBLE WOUNDS

Our nation recently celebrated Memorial Day, a day on which we recognize the service of so many brave American men and women. As we honor our veterans and current service members, it's important that we maintain the promises the government made them in exchange for their service. Just as they have given life and limb in defense of our nation, so the government must honor our commitment to provide health care to those injured in their service.

Recent events have called into question the dedication that the Department of Veterans Affairs has to providing treatment for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). PTSD is a serious psychiatric injury which is often difficult to diagnose. A soldier may develop PTSD in response to the traumatic events he or she often faces in a combat zone. While there are no clear physical symptoms, those affected have persistent frightening thoughts and memories of their ordeal and may even make themselves emotionally detached from their loved ones. While these wounds don't leave physical scars on our soldiers, airmen, and marines; they are just as devastating.

One of my assignments as your Congressman is to help craft the legislation that provides funds for the Department of Veterans Affairs. In 2007 alone the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee provided an increase of over \$11.8 billion to the veterans' healthcare system. My colleagues, both Democrats and Republicans, and I also took specific action to address the increasing

### CONTENTS

*Healing the Invisible Wounds*  
1-2

*Gas Reaches the \$4 Mark*  
2

*The No More Excuses Energy Act*  
2

*Weekly Radio Address*  
2

*Democrats Raise Taxes on American Families*  
2-3

*Protecting Our Vulnerable Children*  
3



cases of PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury. We required that at least \$2.9 billion be spent explicitly on mental health care. We also found it necessary to build a Level 1 Polytrauma Center in San Antonio, supply the necessary funds to provide Polytrauma support clinic teams and additional Polytrauma points of contact, and require that existing Level 1 Polytrauma centers and Mental Health Centers of Excellence be fully staffed and operational in 2008.

My commitment to our soldiers and veterans is strong. I am proud to have worked with both Democrats and Republicans to have supported these and other important issues for our service men and women, both past and present. It is important that we continue to honor our commitment to them and not hamper their recovery efforts in an effort to save a penny here or there. As I begin to work with other members of the Appropriations Committee on the bills to fund your government for the next year, I will continue to fight to make sure that our veterans receive the care they deserve.

---

---

### **GAS REACHES \$4 A GALLON NATIONWIDE; TEXAS IS NOT FAR BEHIND**

Last weekend AAA reported that gas reached a record \$4 a gallon over the weekend and while in Washington, I read that some stations in Austin and Round Rock have reached the \$4 mark.

As Texans headed out the door to church and to spend time with their families, they were hit with the alarming, but not surprising news that gas in Central Texas is brushing up against the \$3.90 mark, and with the national average reaching \$4 over the weekend, there is no doubt that in the coming weeks Texans will be paying even more.

Republicans have a plan for relief. We have a plan that will alleviate prices at the pump immediately and in the future. Nancy Pelosi has the power to schedule a vote on this common-sense energy plan, but refuses to do so. If Nancy Pelosi does not take action, prices at the pump will continue to soar, and the American people will continue to suffer.

---

---

### **REPRESENTATIVE MAC THORNBERRY INTRODUCES NO MORE EXCUSES ENERGY ACT**

This week I co-sponsored the No More Excuses Energy Act (H.R. 3089) introduced by Rep. Mac Thornberry (TX-13) and called on Nancy Pelosi to immediately schedule a vote.

There is no doubt that American families are in desperate need of lower prices at the pump. I applaud my colleague and fellow Texan for introducing a bill that answers the call of Americans. This bill expands U.S. refining capacity, unlocks American energy and encourages the use of clean alternative energy. If passed, it will lower prices at the pump.

So far Democrats have made it clear that a \$4 price tag on a gallon of gas isn't high enough to cause action in Congress. Republicans have stepped up. We have a plan and we have introduced legislation that will alleviate prices at the pump. All we need to help the American people is the willingness of the Democrats

---

---

### **CONGRESSMAN CARTER'S WEEKLY RADIO ADDRESS NOW AVAILABLE**

My latest weekly radio address is now available for download. The weekly address is available while the House of Representatives is in session for use by constituents and in broadcast by Central Texas radio stations.

In this week's 4:57 minute address, I discuss the first steps of the Republican Energy Plan. The audio file is available at for download on my website at <http://carter.house.gov/multimedia> (right click on "MP3" and select "Save Target As" to download.)

---

---

### **DEMOCRATS RAISE TAXES ON AMERICAN FAMILIES**

This week, Democrats once again voted to increase taxes by billions after passing the FY09 Budget Conference Resolution.

At a time when gas prices are reaching record highs and Americans are digging deeper and



---

deeper into their own pockets just to stay afloat, Democrats have, for the second year in a row, passed the largest tax increase in American history.

The Democrats' \$683 billion budget, which officially went into effect this week, will impose an average tax hike of \$2100 on Texas taxpayers, not to mention additional tax increases for small businesses. On top of this, the Democrat budget once again fails to address the looming entitlement crisis.

By passing this budget, Democrats are showing Americans that they will stop at nothing to increase the size of government. They have repeatedly refused opportunities to lower gas prices, and now they are once again asking Texans to pay for their trillions in extra government spending.

At a time when Texas families are scaling back due to record high gas prices, decreasing home values and rising health care costs, Congress should be tightening their belts as well. Instead, Democrats in Congress continue to do the exact opposite, first, by refusing to address high gas prices, and now by imposing the largest tax increase in American history.

---

### **PROTECTING OUR VULNERABLE CHILDREN**

The sexual abuse and exploitation of a child is one of the most despicable and vicious crimes conceivable. As a father of four and a district judge for over 20 years, I feel strongly about doing everything we can to keep our children protected—especially from sexual predators. This fast-paced, cyber world we live in has opened the door for more threats to our children. Child pornography and sexual crimes against children have exploded due to the Internet, chat rooms and social networking sites.

Every day, children are targeted by sexual predators. Whether it's through online social networking or pornographic images of a minor, our children are becoming increasingly vulnerable to predators and pedophiles. Popular social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook make it easier for teens to post and share personal information, pictures and videos, which may make them more vulnerable to online predators. The national statistics paint a frightening picture.

- In 2007 alone, MySpace identified and removed the profiles of 17,000 sex offenders.
- 1 in 5 girls and 1 in 10 boys are sexually exploited before they reach adulthood.
- According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, 1 in 5 children ages 10-17 years old will be sexually solicited online. Of these, 70 percent are teenage girls.
- According to the FBI, 50,000 child sexual predators are online at any time searching for potential victims, and sex offenders are 4 times more likely to re-offend.
- The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children averages 1,400 child pornography reports every week.

I am committed to protecting America's children from sexual predators. Recently, I co-sponsored two bills, the Sex Offender Internet Prohibition Act and the Protecting America's Children Act. The Sex Offender Internet Prohibition Act will impose mandatory penalties of 5 to 20 years in prison for registered sex offenders who knowingly access an Internet website with the intent to communicate with an unsuspecting child. The Protecting America's Children Act ensures that state and local governments have provisions in place to prevent child predators, which have been arrested and are awaiting trial, from fleeing or committing additional crimes.

These are both good bills that take additional steps to protect our children from sexual predators, but Congress must continue to do more. As parents, we can also help alleviate the danger. We can talk to our children about not responding to any unknown e-mail, particularly offensive or dangerous e-mail, chat or any other communication. We can also keep the computer in a family room or other open area, and visit our children's favorite sites and familiarize ourselves to stay informed. We should make sure our children's screen names are non-descriptive so they cannot be identified as a child, and always get to know the adults in our children's lives and stay in touch with them to make sure the relationship (both online and offline) remains within appropriate boundaries.

As a district judge for 20 years, I put criminals behind bars so our children might live in a safer world. If passed, these bills will send a clear message that those who prey on our children will be caught, prosecuted, and punished to the fullest extent of the law. Since coming to Congress, I have worked to protect our nation's children, and I will continue that fight for the safety of every vulnerable child.