



JULY 2008

CONGRESSMAN JIM MORAN'S

News & Views

8TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT * NORTHERN VIRGINIA



Dear Friend:

Serving Northern Virginia in the U.S. House of Representatives is both an honor and a privilege.

This newsletter is an effort to update you on the issues I am working on in Congress. It includes my views and positions on a range of topics from the economy to the Iraq War. I ask that you please take the time to fill out and return the enclosed survey. Your feedback is important to my ability to represent you on Capitol Hill.

If you have any questions, concerns, or thoughts about the issues discussed within, or are in need of constituent assistance, my staff and I stand ready to assist you.

Sincerely,

Jim Moran
Jim Moran

A GI Bill for the 21st Century

The GI Bill of Rights has educated generations of Americans. After WWII, 7.8 million veterans returning from battle had their tuition, books, and a monthly stipend covered, laying the foundation for a robust, educated American middle class that continues to power our economy today. Unfortunately, over time the value of this benefit has been sharply reduced.

In an effort to provide our soldiers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan a benefit worthy of their sacrifice, Senator Jim Webb's new GI Bill of Rights, providing a modernized benefit for a new generation of servicemen and women, was just enacted. Under his proposal, veterans serving after 9/11 are eligible to receive an education benefit equal to the cost of attending their home states' most expensive public institution—applicable to their school of choice (approximately \$9,000 in Virginia). Any unused benefits can also be transferred to the spouse or children of the service member. As an original cosponsor of the legislation, I was honored to help lead efforts in the House to ensure its passage.

Sick Leave Benefits for All Federal Employees

Under the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS) (covering federal employees who joined the civil service after 1984), unused sick leave at retirement is lost and no benefit provided. Studies have shown that employees under this policy tend to use their sick leave more often than those under the old CSRS system, which allows employees to cash out their sick leave benefit at retirement. This FERS "use-it or lose-it" system costs the government \$68 million annually in lost productivity.

In order to correct this structural disincentive, I have introduced legislation (H.R. 5573) that provides FERS employees with up to a \$10,000 lump-sum payout for their sick leave balances at retirement. The payout will be based on an employee's ending salary and the amount of remaining sick leave.

I have been working and will continue to work closely with leading federal employee advocacy groups to design a sick leave benefit that will both increase workplace productivity and incentivize employees to conserve their sick days.



Mr. John Palguta, a 35-year public servant and current Vice President of the Partnership for Public Service, is presented with the Bun Bray Award for Excellence by Congressman Jim Moran at the Council of Former Federal Executives annual meeting.

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An Economy on the Brink and How to Bring It Back

Our national economy is in what maybe the worst economic condition since the Great Depression. In January 2001, a \$3.9 trillion surplus was projected over the next eight years. That would have continued our long-term status as the world's economic superpower while covering the health and retirement costs of 77 million baby-boomers. Today, instead, we have accumulated an additional \$2.4 trillion of deficits. In the last seven years we have had the three largest budget deficits in history.

Over the last six months, 438,000 jobs have been lost. More than seven million families have lost or are at risk of losing their homes. Gas prices are over \$4 a gallon and oil is over \$140 a barrel.

Though American productivity has risen to its highest levels ever per worker, the median family income over the same period has declined by \$972. Since 2002, the average income of the top 1 percent of households has risen 44 percent, or \$335,000. The average income of the bottom 90 percent of households has risen 3 percent, or \$1,000. We now have the greatest income disparity between the top 1 percent and the bottom 90 percent that has existed since 1928.

This has produced the lowest savings rate in history, with most American families overextended with credit card debt and many having taken out home equity loans to make ends meet.

We send \$700 billion overseas each year to purchase oil and \$650 billion per year to purchase cheaper manufactured goods from China and other developing countries.

This has caused a tectonic shift of wealth to oil producing nations such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, Russia and even Iraq. China now holds \$502 billion of our debt securities. We have had to rely on China to purchase our treasury debt since it is much more than domestic investors will absorb. This has made us wholly dependent on authoritarian, antagonistic regions—an unsustainable threat to our national security.

Drastic action is necessary on all fronts.

- 1) You can't fight two wars on four tax cuts. If we continue the Iraq War, we should impose a war surtax to pay for it. Not one dime of the wars in Iraq or Afghanistan has been paid for. All of the cost has been on borrowed money.
- 2) None of the tax cuts passed in 2001 and 2003 were paid for. Unless we are prepared to dramatically cut domestic and defense spending, then the tax cuts must be allowed to expire.
- 3) We need to allow foreign direct investment from the moderate oil producing nations and even China, since it is our money and they are willing to make long-term capital investments in our infrastructure.
- 4) The American people must be prepared to save and to sacrifice, which should have been the message after the 9/11 attacks—rather than rely on the 1 percent of our people in uniform to bear the burden, telling the rest of us to go shop at the mall.

Energy Prices Present Tough Choices, Chance to Get It Right



Gas prices are skyrocketing. Growing demand from China and India and a leveling off in world oil production are the main culprits while market speculation, instability in the Middle East and Nigeria, and the declining value

of the dollar also play a major role.

The solution to our energy predicament (a nation that comprises 4 percent of the world's population yet consumes 25 percent of its energy) requires a comprehensive approach, one that aggressively pursues conservation, promotes the use of clean, renewable fuels, and invests in R&D for the next generation of alternative technologies.

On the conservation side of the equation, Congress took a major step late last year, enacting the first increase in vehicle fuel efficiency standards in more than 30 years. Cars and trucks must achieve 35 miles per gallon fuel efficiency by 2020 under the new standards. This action will reduce U.S. daily oil consumption by four million barrels—twice the amount we import from the Persian Gulf today.

One proposal gaining attention, championed by oil companies and the lawmakers aligned with them is to end the federal moratorium on drilling for oil off our coastlines. More than 80 percent of the oil and gas reserves on public land are already leased by the oil companies. Shouldn't we leave the remaining 20 percent for future generations, especially since it is

located in some of the most environmentally sensitive locations? The problem for the U.S. is we hold approximately three percent of the world's oil reserves yet consume one-quarter of the world's supply. Our domestic reserves pale in comparison to our consumption.

Achieving energy independence is a national priority. Given that China only uses two percent of world supply today, yet makes up 20 percent of the world population, it's clear a continued reliance on fossil fuels will only lead to greater economic insecurity for America. Wind, solar, geothermal, even nuclear energy, are our only responsible options.



Congressman Moran talks with Taylor Buckle during a recent Capitol Hill visit with her family as part of Family Advocacy Day for Children's Hospitals.

Housing Assistance Package on the Way

Congress is nearing completion of a bipartisan plan to halt the massive housing foreclosure crisis and help as many families as possible keep their homes. Roughly 4.2 million mortgages were either past due or in foreclosure at the end of last year. An additional three million borrowers may default in the near future. The housing crisis has wiped out \$2.7 trillion in home values in the past year alone, and it is estimated that \$1.4 trillion in adjustable rate mortgages will reset and climb higher by the end of this year. Some analysts believe as much as \$8 trillion could be lost before the crisis is over.

This new legislation would allow a family with a troubled mortgage to refinance their loan into a government-guaranteed mortgage. Certain conditions apply, including that the home be the owner's primary residence and that the holder of the existing mortgage must accept 85 percent of the home's current appraised value as payment in full. But in return for reducing the mortgage to the actual current value of the home, the loan would be guaranteed for payment by the federal government. It is estimated that this would cost \$3 billion to guarantee \$300 billion of mortgages: The restoration of home value for the homes affected and the surrounding community would more than recoup the cost. There is also a \$3 billion provision to enable localities to buy foreclosed properties and convert them to affordable housing. This last provision has generated a veto threat from the White House if it is included. I will work to override the veto.

Iraq Update

Five years have passed since we invaded Iraq—a decision I opposed from the start because Saddam Hussein was never a direct threat to the U.S. In that time, more than 4,000 American soldiers have given the ultimate sacrifice and U.S. taxpayers have spent \$656 billion on the war.

While our troops continue to bravely carry out the mission asked of them, the Iraqi government has failed to make the kind of political progress needed to resolve the bitter sectarian conflict and provide adequate levels of vital services like public safety, clean water and electricity.

Financially, Iraq has benefited significantly from the surge in oil prices. Officials there are sitting on \$100 billion in surplus profit—they've made \$72 billion alone this year. Yet despite this accumulation of wealth, U.S. taxpayers continue to pay for the construction of Iraqi schools, hospitals, and even the cost of picking up their garbage.

A timely and safe redeployment of our troops out of Iraq is long overdue. Our decision to invade Iraq without an exit strategy was the worst foreign policy blunder in our nation's history.

Torture, Guantanamo Bay Facility Need to Go

Torture is immoral, illegal, and undermines the principles our country stands for. It is also ineffective, resulting in false information from people who will say anything to end the pain. In addition, it puts our own soldiers and diplomats at greater risk of being tortured by our enemies.

Guantanamo Bay Detention Facility (Gitmo) and Abu Ghraib are a stain on our nation's reputation and provide powerful propaganda for those who recruit anti-American extremists.

While down from its peak of 772 detainees, Gitmo continues to hold approximately 250 foreign nationals—indeinitely and without charge. Aside from the 15 true terrorists who were recently brought to Gitmo, most of the original detainees kept for years were never involved in a hostile action against the U.S.

My views align with the majority on the Supreme Court who, for the third straight time, insist that the President does not have, and I quote from the most recent decision, "the power to switch the Constitution on or off at will." In order to restore our moral leadership abroad and our own nation's faith in the rule of law, Gitmo must be shuttered immediately and the U.S. should cease to use torture as an interrogation tool.

A New Approach to Iran

Iran is on a path to get nuclear weapons, and we must deter them. However, I share the view of Admiral Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, that a solution lies not in using our military might to change Iranian behavior but rather smart power—diplomatic, financial, and international pressure.

Iran's population is young and growing. Seventy percent are under the age of 30. These Iranians are a media-savvy, wired generation. The question we need to be asking is will their perceptions of the U.S. be influenced by Abu Ghraib scandals and threats of military attack by the U.S. and/or Israel, or by more traditional American values of strength through diplomacy?

The U.S. Library of Congress has found a strong appetite for

western Liberal Arts—philosophy, theology, literature—in Iran. Iranians comprise the third highest number of online searches on the Library's website. With my support, the Library is in the process of putting much of their western canon online, the idea being that by sharing our ideals through literature we can build bridges with the young and disaffected in Iran.

As in North Korea and Libya, not to mention the Cold War, we have witnessed that painstaking diplomacy can succeed, it just requires great determination. The situation in Iran is no different. A military strike might be successful in the short run, but long term it would be a disaster dwarfing our struggles in Iraq.

Abstinence-Only Leaving Our Children Unprotected

Reports continue to show that “abstinence-only” sex education programs do not decrease the level of sexual activity among teens in the U.S. A study commissioned by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services concluded that students in “abstinence-only” programs were no more likely to abstain from sex, delay initiation of sex, or have fewer sexual partners than students who did not participate. Of further concern, many of these programs funded in recent years by the Depart-

ment of Health and Human Services have been found to use curriculum that is medically inaccurate, such as discouraging condom use as largely ineffective in preventing pregnancies and AIDs.

Recently, I both amended federal law to require that abstinence-only programs be medically accurate to receive federal funding and led a group of 76 House members in sending a letter urging that a majority of the \$176 million in funding for abstinence-only programs be redirected to comprehensive sex

education—proven programs that include abstinence education but do not rely on it as the only means to prevent STDs and unwanted pregnancies. Leading medical and public health organizations from the American Medical Association to the National Academy of Sciences’ Institute of Medicine agree that the abstinence-only approach is flawed and the investment of hundreds of millions to promote it makes for poor fiscal and public health policy.



Congressman Moran touring Hopkins House Preschool Academy in Fairfax County, receives a birthday book from academy student Christopher Wilson.

Tahirih Justice Center Committed to Protecting Women

Gender-based violence is a sad fact of life for millions of women around the world—particularly in developing countries. From forced marriage to domestic abuse and rape, there is a great need to combat crimes against women. In that light, Northern Virginia is fortunate to have the Falls Church-based Tahirih Justice Center, a foremost advocate for the rights of immigrants fleeing gender-based violence.

Tahirih is truly an inspirational organization. They were a lead organization advocating for the implementation of the International Marriage Brokers Protection Act, a law passed in 2006 that prevents people convicted of violent or sexual crimes from purchasing mail-order brides. On a day-to-day basis, Tahirih helps women escaping abusive situations both domestically and abroad, assisting them in the transition to living on their own in a safe environment with steady employment. Through the appropriations process, I have been honored to support their work, providing a total of \$1.47 million in grant funding since 2006.

Restoring Four Mile Run

Four Mile Run, the channel of water providing a border between Arlington and Alexandria, was once a wetland area abundant with fish and wildlife. What had become an unsightly and forgotten resource is now being rediscovered as an exciting green corridor in our urban community.

A new vision for Four Mile Run, charted jointly by Alexandria and Arlington, envisions the restoration of a more natural stream that will improve water quality; reintroduce native aquatic, plant, and animal species; and enhance public recreational opportunities with gardens, trails, and footbridges, making it a desirable waterfront destination.

I am proud to have supported this project for the past decade, providing more than \$7 million in earmarked appropriations funding since 2001. The Army Corps of Engineers is currently working to complete a feasibility study to ensure that the project will fulfill the requirement that it provide protection against a future 100-year flood.

For more information on the future of Four Mile Run, please visit

www.novaregion.org.

Slam Dunking the NBA's Color Barrier

The House of Representatives passed a resolution (H.Con.Res. 286) in March, which I authored, to honor Earl "Big Cat" Lloyd, an Alexandria native, NBA Hall of Famer, and the first African American to break the pro-league's color barrier. At a time in the U.S. when racial prejudices were ram-

phant and unchecked, Earl Lloyd stood tall, breaking down the door of discrimination so that future generations might not have to experience such prejudice.

From his first game in the NBA on October 31, 1950, Earl built a noted career over the course of nine seasons, playing in 560 games and helping carry

his team to an NBA Championship in 1955. He was inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in 2003. The new gymnasium at T.C. Williams High School (which would have been Lloyd's alma mater absent segregation) was named in his honor last winter.



PHOTO CREDIT: HARRY MERRITT (OUR TOWN)

Commemorating Black History Month

Congressman Moran addresses the audience on the opening of Freedom House Museum. The Northern Virginia Urban League sponsored the official opening of Freedom House Museum with a ribbon cutting and tours of this historical structure located at 1315 Duke Street in Alexandria. The building was once headquarters for the largest domestic slave trading firm in America.

Reforming Gun Laws, Honoring the Virginia Tech Victims

The horrific shootings at Virginia Tech last year left all Americans stunned and unable to comprehend what would cause someone to commit such murderous violence. In the weeks that followed, it was brought to light that the shooter had been able to buy two handguns and high capacity magazines despite having been detained in a mental health facility—an event that should have prevented him from buying a gun. This inexcusable situation was due to flaws in the reporting system that sends information to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS).

In response, Congress passed legislation, which I cosponsored, that provides financial assistance to aid states in the design and implementation of an improved system to submit criminal and mental health records to the NICS database. While this legislation was a responsible, needed step to curb the sale of illegal firearms, much work remains to be done. Closing the loophole that allows the sale of firearms at gun shows without performing a background check is a good place to start.

ENDA: Ending Work Place Discrimination

The new Democratic-led Congress took a big step toward ending discrimination in the workplace with passage of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA; H.R. 3685). ENDA would make it illegal to discriminate against an employee because of his or her sexual orientation. I was proud to cosponsor this legislation. It expands to all citizens a right many of us take for granted: the ability to be evaluated in the workplace solely on the basis of one's qualifications and job performance.

While ENDA legislation is still being considered in the Senate and the White House has issued a veto threat, this is a bill with strong public support whose day is coming soon. The American people understand the notion that the American workplace should be free of discrimination.



Cora Kelly School is presented with a check for \$192,500 to construct a new “green” roof over the Alexandria elementary school. The funds were made available through a targeted appropriation directed by Rep. Moran.

Sovereign Wealth Funds: A Growing Financial Giant

I recently founded the House Task Force on Sovereign Wealth Funds, a working group created to study the economic and security issues arising from the growing influence of sovereign wealth funds (SWFs). SWFs are state-controlled investment vehicles funded largely through revenues from oil and more cheaply manufactured foreign goods. Experts estimate SWFs hold \$2.2 trillion in currency reserves. In the next decade, those reserves are projected to grow to more than \$13.4 trillion, more than the value of the New York Stock Exchange.

Many of my colleagues in the Congress are suspicious of SWFs. But until we truly commit to pay down our national debt and sharply reduce our consumption of oil, the question will be how can we transform SWF investment into well-paying jobs for American citizens? The Department of Treasury reports about \$200 billion in SWF foreign investments were made in the U.S. last year, a large portion of which went to bailing out our financial institutions teetering on the brink of bankruptcy. Without SWF investment, our economy would be in a much worse position with a deep recession firmly in place. I plan to present Congress with a list of policy recommendations on the Task Force’s findings by the end of the year.

Congratulations to Rep. Moran’s 2008 Nominees Appointed to the U.S. Military Academies

United States Air Force Academy

Katherine Heffelmire — George C Marshall

Leslie Martell — Flint Hill

Jamaal Paul — Edison

Aaron Wilson — TC Williams

United States Merchant Marines

Cynthia Brice — Yorktown

Elizabeth Gillispie — Edison

Sarah Marino — Hayfield Secondary

Daniel Mills — Hayfield Secondary

Benjamin Zeman — West Potomac

United States Military Academy

Matthew Hurley — Episcopal

Kevin Kuwahara — George C Marshall

United States Naval Academy

Andrew Breen — George Mason

Fernando Castro — Annandale

Tom Alex Chmelik — Western Reserve Academy

Michael Costelloe — George Mason

John Fritts — Bishop Ireton

Andrew Herrera — Trinity School

Progress on Dulles Rail

“Slow and bumpy” may be the appropriate way to describe progress on the Dulles Rail project. After overcoming concerns raised by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the largest Metro rail project in 30 years was given approval in May to advance to the final design stage. The Northern Virginia Congressional Delegation, led by Governor Kaine, has fought hard to avert disaster and keep the project up and running.

Assuming a baseline cost estimate of \$2.581 billion, the FTA has moved the project’s overall rating back to “Medium,” qualifying it for \$900 million in matching federal funds. This decision also releases \$159 million in federal funds secured through congressional appropriations that will be used to cover utility relocations already begun along Rte. 7 and Rte.123 in Tysons Corner.

In another major Metro development, legislation reauthorizing Amtrak (H.R. 6003) enacted in June included \$1.5 billion in funds over ten years for Metro. To receive the federal funding, Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia would be required to provide matching funds. It’s an excellent policy, one that will go a long way toward addressing concerns about Metro’s ability to absorb future riders into the existing system once rail to Dulles is complete.

Your Views Matter

Please fill out the following survey online at www.moran.house.gov or clip this page, place in an envelope and mail to my District Office at 333 N. Fairfax St. Suite 201, Alexandria, VA 22314.



1) The U.S. Supreme Court recently considered the District of Columbia's ban on handguns, ruling 5-4 that the law was unconstitutional based on an interpretation of the 2nd Amendment that emphasizes the right to bear arms by individuals rather than state militias.

- a) I support the decision
- b) I oppose the decision
- c) Unsure

2) How should the U.S. prevent Iran from pursuing nuclear technology that could be used to build nuclear weapons?

- a) Use all diplomatic tools at our disposal, including sanctions
- b) Use military force or back Israel's use of military force against Iran
- c) Use diplomatic tools first but favor military force
- d) Exhaust all diplomatic tools before using military force
- e) Unsure
- f) Other: _____

3) What should be the U.S. strategy in Iraq? (may check more than one)

- a) Begin swift withdrawal immediately
- b) Set a timetable for withdrawal that allows troops to be drawn down gradually
- c) Maintain indefinitely the number of troops in Iraq deemed necessary for the country to become self-sufficient and stable
- d) Other: _____

NAME: _____

EMAIL: _____

ADDRESS: _____

*Providing your email automatically signs you up to receive emails from the Moran e-News.

CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____



Upcoming Events

An Economy on the Brink: A Legacy of Debt, Its Impact on Our Children, and How We Can Break the Cycle

Town Hall Meeting

FEATURING

David Walker

Former Comptroller General and head of the GAO

**Monday, July 28
7:00PM to 9:00PM**

T.C. Williams High School Auditorium
3330 King Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22302



Annual Women's Issues Conference

**Saturday, September 13
9:00AM to 1:00PM**

Kenmore Middle School
200 S. Carlin Springs Road, Arlington, Virginia 22204

A Town Hall Discussion

with

CHARLIE WILSON

Former Congressman depicted in hit movie *Charlie Wilson's War*

On U.S. Foreign Policy in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan



**Wednesday, September 24
7:30PM to 9:30PM**

Schlesinger Center
Northern Virginia Community College
3001 N. Beauregard Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22311

Constituent Service Update

My staff and I stand ready to assist you with issues related to the federal government. Please call my Alexandria district office at **703-971-4700** if you are experiencing problems with Social Security, Medicare, passports, the Department of Veterans' Affairs, the IRS, immigration matters, or other areas within the federal government's purview.

For concerns regarding pending legislation before Congress, I urge you to contact me by email or phone. To send an email, visit www.moran.house.gov, click the "Contact" link on the left-hand side of the homepage, enter your contact information, compose your message, and hit send. To call my Capitol Hill office, just dial **202-225-4376**.

Touring the Capital



My office can assist you with booking tours of the U.S. Capitol and the White House. Please visit my website at www.moran.house.gov for more information. **Reminder:** Capitol tours are booked through my office and are readily available with at least one week's notice. White House tours, however, are determined by the White House Visitor office and are extremely limited, requiring notice months in advance.

Ordering U.S. Flags

American flags that have flown over the U.S. Capitol are available for purchase through my office. Each flag is accompanied by a certificate with the date the flag was flown and who it was flown for or in memory of. To request a flag flown over the Capitol, please visit www.moran.house.gov or call 202-225-4376 for more information.



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CONGRESSMAN JIM MORAN'S

News & Views

8TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT * NORTHERN VIRGINIA

James Moran

M.C.
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8th Congressional District
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