



# Your Congressman Reports

## Danny K. Davis

Representative in Congress

July 2005 – 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District - Illinois

### 109<sup>th</sup> Congress Completes First Six Months

As we conclude the first half of the year 2005, it is time once again to report to you, my constituents through this newsletter highlighting some of the legislative, programmatic, coordinative and developmental activities in which I, and my staff, have been involved. *Please check the calendar of upcoming events and activities and participate in as many of them as you are interested and possibly can attend.*

This year's summer interns Jaira Harrington (Spelman College), Joe Varcadipane (Robert Wood Johnson Medical School), Lara Lickhalter (Loyola University) and Lauren Breithaupt (Loyola University) have demonstrated a high level of academic preparation and commitment to the public interest. They have sampled a great range of activities and issues over the course of this summer and everyone in our office wishes them the best as they prepare to return to their respective schools.

**To reach my office: 773-533-7520**  
**[www.house.gov/davis](http://www.house.gov/davis)**



Congressman Davis and DC interns Lara Lickhalter, Lauren Breithaupt, Jaira Harrington and Joe Varcadipane.

### 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District Annual High School Art Competition



Congressman Davis with Art Competition winner Melanie Shavers, Mozell Shavers and Schunita Shavers.

Friday, May 6, 2005, fourteen High Schools from throughout the 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District participated in the District's 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Art Competition: *An Artistic Discovery*. As usual, the quality of the works submitted was most impressive. Prizes were awarded to six winners. (In addition to the art competition I recently sponsored two Town Hall meetings on paying for college.)

1<sup>st</sup> Place - Melanie Shavers, Manley Career Academy  
2<sup>nd</sup> Place - Heidi Burtner, Proviso West High School  
3<sup>rd</sup> Place - Laura Weiss, Whitney Young High School  
4<sup>th</sup> Place - Michael Boyd, Westinghouse High School  
5<sup>th</sup> Place - Dontera Evans, Providence St. Mel High School  
6<sup>th</sup> Place - Marcel Dawkins, Oak Park-River Forest High School

### Social Security

The debate around Social Security continues to loom. In the 7<sup>th</sup> District discussions are ongoing. I have held and participated in focus groups, forums, townhall meetings and we discuss the issue each week on radio and television shows. During the months of July, August and September, you will have a number of additional opportunities to make your opinions and concerns known. You may call my office at 773-533-7520 to find out when something will be taking place in your immediate neighborhood or community.

More than 47 million Americans receive Social Security benefits. More than 33 million are retirees. 48% of seniors would live in poverty without Social Security benefits. Social Security provides 90% or more of total income for 44% of all non-married women 65 and older. For 60% of retirees, Social Security makes up more than half of their income.

My position on Social Security reform has been very clear, "if it's not broke, don't fix it." *Is Social Security in "crisis?"* Social Security has funding for at least another 36 years with no reduction in benefits. Even if we do nothing it has funds to pay 74% of all benefits indefinitely. *Continued on next page . . .*

Social Security is more sound today than it has been in most of its almost 70-year history. Over the next 75 years, the cost of tax cuts for the top 1% of the population enacted during the past five years would cover 91% of the shortfall in the Social Security Trust Fund according to the Trustee's estimate (\$3.4 trillion out of \$3.7 trillion.) The President's plan for "progressive indexation" is not progressive at all, it is highly regressive. This formula would change the basis of indexing benefits from wages to prices. Although very low income workers would be protected, middle income workers would receive the largest benefit cuts, cuts that will grow through time eventually reaching more than 40% of the scheduled benefits by the end of the 75 year planing period.

## What is Congressman Davis' Position on Social Security?

As your representative in Congress, I remain committed to the promise we made to our seniors, now and in the future and will oppose any attempts to cut benefits for our seniors. Privatization will undermine funding for Social Security and place beneficiaries at risk. I strongly oppose all attempts to privatize Social Security and remain confident that Social Security will remain solid for generations to come. For further discussions on Social Security, you are cordially invited to attend town hall meetings which have been scheduled for the months of August, September and October.



**Congressman Davis congratulates students from Chicago who were national finalists in the *Do the Write Thing* essay contest. The students wrote essays on reducing violence and discussed their essays with the Congressman. Left to right: Tamar Rosenberg, Candice Binuyo, Mary Heubner, Taylor Lee, Deen Rosenberg, David Lee and Kimberly Gnatt.**

## Child Welfare

Foster care programs are vital to the protection of today's children and the development of tomorrow's leaders. On July 21, 2005, I introduced two pieces of legislation to strengthen the laws related to caring for abused and neglected children. The Guardianship Assistance Promotion and Kinship Support Act (H.R. 3380) would provide support and assistance to guardianship and kinship care families. For example, by providing monthly financial payments and helping families access eligible services. The Stronger Families Act (H.R. 3379) would encourage states to improve their rates of placing children in permanent homes via the path that best meets the children's needs, be it reunification, adoption or guardianship.

## Criminal Justice

My work on criminal justice issues continues to be enthusiastic and proactive both locally and nationally. I have continued to hold townhall meetings and participate with other entities such as the Governor's Commission to assist with ex-offender re-entry.

The most recent meeting was a town hall meeting on July 9, 2005 at the Austin High School to help individuals who qualified to have their criminal records cleared and clarified. More than two thousand people attended. Among those participating were Cook County States Attorney Richard Devine and Clerk of the Circuit Court Dorothy Brown. The meeting was highly successful and I thank all those who participated, especially the representatives of the pro bono legal services community. Another Townhall meeting on Expungement will be held on October 27. Please consult the calendar of events on the last page of this newsletter for further details.

On the national level my 2<sup>nd</sup> Chance Re-Entry Bill continues to move progressively toward passage. Former Representative Rob Portman, the other originator of the legislation was recently appointed by President Bush to be the U.S. Trade Representative and his lead role as chief Republican sponsor has been assumed by Representative Chris Cannon from Utah. We expect hearings during September in the House.

On June 27, 2005 I re-introduced legislation to revive the system of parole for Federal prisoners. The legislation attracted widespread and growing interest in the last Congress and it is expected that support for the bill will continue to grow in the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress. The bill number is HR 3072. For those interested in any of the bills described in this newsletter you may link to them from my website: [www.house.gov/davis](http://www.house.gov/davis) via the Library of Congress site [thomas.loc.gov](http://thomas.loc.gov).

Grant program monies continue to be available for agencies, organizations and faith-based programs to work on these issues; however they require sound, well developed and effective proposals that work!

## Health, Education and other Human Services

The future of Medicare, Medicaid, prescription drug coverage, medical malpractice insurance premium cost, surgery and hospital costs, the role of managed care and the cost of medical education, training and research continue to dominate issues surrounding health care and medicine. The 7<sup>th</sup> District is fortunate to have one of the largest assemblages of hospitals in the nation. The District has an excellent infrastructure of private institutions and two outstanding public hospitals (Cook County and the University of Illinois), two VA hospitals, four medical schools and a strong network of community health centers, teen health centers, neighborhood clinics and community mental health centers. With the recent closing of one of our veteran's in-patient facilities there is need for increased resources at the remaining facilities to guarantee the availability of health care services to our veterans.



**Congressman Davis meets with Robert A. Arciola (Executive Director) and Robert Statam (Board Member) of the Vaughn Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America to discuss veteran's health care issues.**

The big issue in health care is keeping our hospitals and health centers solvent, viable and able to function. It is critical to channel enough money into the system to keep programs alive which help to keep people engaged in efforts to learn how to have more healthy life styles . . . i.e. smoking cessation, healthy diets, exercise regimens, health education for children, appropriate screening and immunization protocols and continued advocacy for resources and decision-making which meet our health status needs.

## Education

Education is always high on my priority list of concerns. That is one of the reasons why my office welcomes DC visits by students who are studying government and public policy. Fortunately, the District also has an excellent infrastructure in place with a large number of institutions, buildings and programs. My principal concerns are adequate funding, having a full complement of qualified, competent and practicing education administrators, teachers and other personnel.

There is a tremendous need to get parents and community members more actively involved and engaged in promoting education. Therefore, much of my legislative and policy efforts are centered in that direction. There is a serious shortage of trained, qualified, certified and available teachers in several content and subject matter areas and there is an absolute shortage of African American and Latino male teachers in early childhood and elementary education. As a matter of fact, out of a total of 136,431 males teaching kindergarten to sixth grade, only 9,893 are African American and 13,831 are Hispanic. The same numbers for females of all races and ethnic groups are 1,336,173, for African Americans 100,286 and for Hispanics 77,548.

When you examine the small number of African American and Latino male teachers, there seems little doubt that this factor contributes to the high drop out rate for these groups. Higher Education is on the docket for reauthorization this year and I shall be fighting for full-funding and for programs to recruit, retain and graduate more minority students.

## Postal Reform

As Ranking Member of the Government Reform Committee Special Panel on Postal Reorganization, I continue to press for meaningful reform of the United States Postal Service (USPS) that balances the needs of the Postal Service with those of the people and the businesses that rely on it. The USPS is part of a \$900 billion dollar industry that employs more than nine million people and represents 9% of the Gross Domestic Product. Unfortunately, it has historically accumulated billions of dollars in debt and currently has tremendous unfunded liabilities that challenge its effectiveness.

Given the importance of this issue, I along with Representative John McHugh (NY), Henry Waxman (CA), and Tom Davis (VA) sponsored bipartisan legislation which unanimously passed the House Government Reform Committee. The bill preserves universal service, protects collective bargaining, provides the Postal Service with rate-making flexibility and gives mailers rate stability. It requires the USPS Board of Governors to report to Congress on the number of contracts with women, minorities and small businesses and gives the Inspector General the tools to ensure fairness in business contracting. The bill protects our domestic airlines from outsourcing of jobs to foreign air carriers. This bill is the best option to protect our treasured national asset before it is in crisis. The sponsors project that H.R. 22 will come to the House floor by the end of the month.



**During their visit to Washington DC Congressman Davis met with students from Westchester Middle School and their principal Mr. Eric Bailey to discuss how congress works.**

**Calendar of Official Events With Congressman Danny K. Davis**

**July 6** - 7:00 p.m.  
**July 9** - 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
**July 30** - 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.  
**August 2** - 7:00 p.m.  
**August 4** - 7:00 p.m.  
**August 8** - 7:00 p.m.  
**August 9** - 7:00 p.m.  
**August 11** - 7:00 p.m.  
**August 16** - 7:00 p.m.  
**August 18** - 7:00 p.m.  
**August 20** - 12:00 noon

**Bellwood Townhall**  
**Expungement Townhall**  
**Criminal Justice Townhall**  
**Broadview Townhall**  
**Oak Park Townhall**  
**Townhall Meeting - Education**  
**Hillside Townhall**  
**Berkeley Townhall**  
**Westchester Townhall**  
**Townhall Meeting - The War in Iraq**  
**Annual Back-to-School Education Townhall**

**August 24** - 7:00 p.m.  
**August 25** - 7:00 p.m.  
**August 29** - 7:00 p.m.  
**September 9** - 5:30 p.m.  
**September 10** - 9:00 a.m.  
**September 12** - 7:00 p.m.  
**September 17** - 8:00 a.m.  
**October 22** - 9:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m.

**River Forest Townhall**  
**Townhall Meeting - The War in Iraq**  
**Townhall Meeting - Social Security**  
**Annual State-of-the-District Townhall - Day 1**  
**Annual State-of-the-District Townhall - Day 2**  
**Townhall Meeting**  
**Drug Recovery Townhall**  
**Expungement Townhall**

Bellwood Village Hall - 3200 Washington, Bellwood  
 Austin High School - 231 North Pine, Chicago  
 3333 West Arthington, Chicago  
 Broadview Village Hall - 2350 South 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Broadview  
 Oak Park Village Hall - 123 Madison, Oak Park  
 South Loop Elementary - 1212 South Plymouth Court, Chicago  
 New Hillside Village Hall - 425 Hillside Avenue, Hillside  
 Berkeley Public Library - 1637 Taft Avenue, Berkeley  
 Westchester Village Hall - 10300 Roosevelt Road, Westchester  
 Loyola University - 820 South Michigan, Chicago  
 Columbus Park - 5701 West Jackson Boulevard, Chicago  
 [Social Security info will be available 10:00 a.m. till 6:00 p.m.]  
 River Forest Community Center - 8020 Madison, River Forest  
 Old St. Pat's Church - 711 West Monroe, Chicago  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Presbyterian Church, 1936 South Michigan, Chicago  
 Malcolm X College - 1901 West Van Buren, Chicago  
 Malcolm X College - 1901 West Van Buren, Chicago  
 Chinese Community Center - 250 W. 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, Chicago  
 Union Park - 1501 West Randolph, Chicago  
 St. Paul C.O.G.I.C. - 4525 South Wabash, Chicago



**Congressman Davis meets with Michelle Rhodes Brown and other members of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority to discuss budget cuts to critical programs.**

**Small Business**

I remain a member of the Small Business Committee and continue to be a strong advocate for small business development. Small firms create seventy five percent of all new jobs. The Small Business Index (SBI) measures the economic environment for small businesses. It is at an eight-year low. The history of the SBI shows a relationship between favorable economic conditions for small business and increased job creation. Unfortunately, next year's budget cuts funding for the Small Business Administration. The funding requests for the agency declined by almost \$120 million from last year's request and has gone down by \$86 million for the FY2006 budget. The SBA's loan programs were among the most affected by the latest budget. Small businesses in the 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District are in great need of access to capital through programs such as those offered by the Small Business Administration.

**U.S. House of Representatives**  
 Washington, D.C. 20515-1307

*Danny K. Davis*

**M.C.**

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**Official Business**

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