

PATTY MURRAY'S WASHINGTON VIEW

U.S. Senator Patty Murray's Weekly Report to the People of Washington – April 9, 2004

Challenging Airbus, Defending WA Jobs

Recently, I wrote a letter to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld calling into question Airbus's campaign of distortion and half-truths aimed at undermining Boeing, the Air Force and the KC-767 tanker lease program. While Secretary Rumsfeld has yet to reply to my letter, I did get a reply from Mr. Ralph Crosby, the CEO of the North America division of the European Aeronautic Defense and Space Company, owner of Airbus. Mr. Crosby continues to assert that EADS and Airbus are interested in supplying tanker aircraft to the Air Force.

I wrote back to Mr. Crosby this week demanding that Airbus provide the American public with a full accounting of its lobbying activities and its work with tanker opponents in Washington, D.C. I asked Airbus to make public its tanker proposal, which the Air Force deemed "high risk" when it selected Boeing to manufacture tankers. I do not expect Airbus to provide the American public with any of this information. But, you can be sure, Airbus will continue its efforts to take the tanker contract from Boeing and its American workforce – and to outsource it to Europe.

There is a thorough and comprehensive review of the tanker deal now underway in Washington, D.C. Importantly, this week, the Department of Defense's Inspector General's report on the tanker deal was released in public. Despite highlighting several areas of concern, the IG concluded that there was no compelling reason not to proceed with the Tanker Lease program. I will continue to work against Airbus's efforts to deny work to Boeing and its employees.

<http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=220169>

Maintaining Canadian Cattle Ban

This week I joined six other senators in asking USDA Secretary Ann Veneman to withdraw a Department proposal that could allow live cattle from Canada to enter the United States as early as this spring. Wednesday was the last day for public comment on USDA's proposed rule.

The proposal by USDA would list Canada – the country of origin for the single case of Mad Cow disease discovered in the U.S. in December of 2003 and a case in Alberta, Canada, last May – as a country with "minimal risk" and could allow imports of Canadian beef into the U.S. as early as this spring. My colleagues and I think this move would prematurely put American beef producers and consumers at risk.

<http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=220299>

Helping WA Communities Protect Themselves – And the Nation

On Tuesday I encouraged Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge to work with local communities as a full federal partner to protect Washington State and the nation. Thanks to coordinated local and federal efforts, our State has made some important progress in the field of homeland security. While these efforts have been impressive, we still need the Federal Government to be a committed partner. Unfortunately, in the areas of port security, first responders and border security, this has not been the case.

I am particularly disturbed by the Secretary's comments that our ports and private industries should be held accountable for this Administration's security mandates. This plan could encourage cargo diversion to close by Canadian ports, outsource thousands of high-paying port jobs and leave our families and economy just as vulnerable to attack.

I am also concerned by the nickel-and-diming of our first responders. We don't want our communities to have to choose between preparing for a tornado and preparing for a smallpox attack. We're asking our emergency responders to prepare for everything and they need more funding to do it. It is time for the government to share the responsibility on this critical issue.

http://murray.senate.gov/homeland_security/hs_news.cfm

Fighting for Job Training That Works

This week, the Administration rolled out a workforce training proposal that cuts \$300 million from existing assistance for workforce training. The announcement warms over an initiative that was already unanimously rejected by the U.S. Senate last fall, and these new cuts come on top of over \$500 million in job training and employment service reductions since this President took office. In our state, thousands of workers are being denied training and re-employment opportunities because this Administration has not made job training a funding priority.

Helping people train for good-paying jobs will have a ripple effect on our economy. It will help whole communities generate new economic activity, and provide real futures for young workers trying to decide where to live and raise their families. We must assure adequate federal funding to provide businesses with a skilled and trained labor pool and maintain our nation's global economic competitive advantage.

<http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=220127>

Meeting with Rotarians

My father-in-law was a very proud Rotarian. He introduced me to the ethic of service that guides Rotary around the world, and he always told me I should visit Rotary clubs anytime I could. On Tuesday, I visited the Everett Rotary Club and spent time with veterans and community and business leaders. It was a great experience, and I really enjoyed talking with these great Washingtonians who are doing so much for their communities – and their nation.

Honored by Steamship Operators

On Tuesday, the National Associations of Maritime Organizations awarded me their "Legislator of the Year" award. I've fought for our mariners and maritime industries because – like you – I know that they are a part of our way of life here in the Pacific Northwest. I'm very proud to be acknowledged for the work I've done to increase resources for the Coast Guard, secure funding for Washington's ferries, and improve port security without compromising the free and efficient flow of international trade.

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For further information and updates on my work on behalf of our great state, please visit my Web site, <http://murray.senate.gov>.

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