

PATTY MURRAY'S WASHINGTON VIEW

U.S. Senator Patty Murray's Weekly Report to the People of Washington – July 2, 2004

Seattle: Working for Improved Port Security

In June 2002, Congress passed the Maritime Transportation Security Act. It required ports and vessels to implement their Coast Guard-approved security plans by July 1st, 2004. 95 percent of the cargo entering our nation's ports enters by ship, and we've known since 9/11 that we've needed to improve our ability to secure these shipments. The measures called for in the Maritime Transportation Act will allow our ports to deter threats, and will create a greater framework for coordinated response in the event of an attack.

On Tuesday, I received a private briefing from officials at the Port of Seattle, and viewed a demonstration of technology that will help make our ports safer. Also joining me at the event was Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY). I asked Senator Clinton to join me to discuss our shared desire to improve security at ports across the country.

Our state's ports are the lifeblood of our economy, as one out of every three jobs in Seattle is dependent on international trade. I want to make sure that our people, our jobs and our economy are well-protected from terrorist attacks, and that we can continue to do our work safely and efficiently.

Get the full details on my work for more secure ports:

<http://murray.senate.gov/portsecurity>

Kent: Celebrating More Efficient Transportation

On Wednesday, I also joined transportation and community leaders to break ground on the South 228th Street Extension project in Kent. This is the 10th FAST (Freight Action Strategy for Seattle-Everett-Tacoma) Corridor project to begin construction; seven have been completed. FAST Corridor is series of grade-crossing and port-access projects in the corridor between Tacoma and Everett. When complete, it will improve the flow of cargo from our ports to major distribution venues like the Kent/Auburn Valley, and eventually to the rest of the nation – and the world.

As Ranking Member – and former chair – of the Senate Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee, I'm proud to have secured over \$150 million for FAST Corridor projects like this one. I've made transportation in Washington state one of my top priorities because I know it doesn't only put our state to work, but it gets us to work. I'll continue to fight in the U.S. Senate for projects like these that battle congestion and keep our state's economy growing.

Read the full text of my speech:

<http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=223581>

Tacoma: Increasing Access to Affordable Housing

The Section 8 Voucher program, administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), allows very low-income families to choose and lease or purchase safe, affordable privately owned rental housing. Last April, the Bush Administration changed the formula used to calculate reimbursements to the public housing authorities that administer the program. The result will inevitably be that the 45,000 Washington families who rely on Section 8 vouchers to put a roof over their heads will be severely stressed. Many will lose their homes.

After the Bush Administration's announcement, I took several steps to protect Washington families. In May 2003, I sent a letter to the HUD Secretary with other Democratic Senators. On January 22, 2004, I voted for the Omnibus Appropriations bill, which increased Section 8 funding by \$1 billion. I'm also an original cosponsor of S. 2467, which clarifies that renewals should be based on the most accurate, up-to-date method.

As another step in this fight, on Wednesday, in Tacoma, I convened a roundtable discussion on affordable housing. The

meeting, held at the Family Investment Center in Tacoma, brought together advocates, leaders, and tenants in Washington's affordable housing communities. I organized this event to hear directly from those on the frontlines of Washington's affordable housing crisis so I can continue to fight on the Senate floor and on the Appropriations Committee. I'll use these examples to fight this policy every day.

Seattle: Better Education, Better Trade

On Thursday, I joined Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) to co-chair the 9th annual Washington Council on International Trade Conference. I founded this event, and have co-hosted it with my fellow Washington Senator, originally former Sen. Slade Gorton (R-WA), since its inception. It's always an opportunity for me to update our trade leaders on what's happening at the federal level with the issues that concern them, and to hear about their issues and concerns as well.

This year, I spoke on a panel titled "Education Policy: Preparation for Global Competitiveness." I see education as one of the keys to our ability to stay competitive in the global economy. We will not be able to sustain and grow trade and the economy without an educated, trained workforce. That's why I'm working on legislation that will actually help improve our nation's schools – such as the PASS Act – by putting resources where they're needed.

Read my remarks:

<http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=223595>

Bellingham: Securing a Local Landmark

The Bellingham Federal Building has been an integral part of the city's life since it was built in 1913, providing critical services to residents. When it was being designed, the city's postmaster, Hugh Eldrige, decided that it should be built with all its entrances at street level so that it would be more accessible to Bellingham's residents – particularly the elderly and the handicapped. It was the first building of its kind to be designed that way.

Two years ago, I received a letter from Bellingham Mayor Jon Asmundson in which he told me that, like any aging building, this one needed a significant amount of retrofitting and renovation. But, the General Services Administration had decided to sell or destroy the building.

So, I wrote the General Services Administrator, urging him to reconsider the decision. I insisted that we could bring the renovation costs down to a manageable level, and that we could get the money needed. The city committed to take over the renovated building, we convinced the GSA to transfer this vital local landmark to the people of Bellingham at less than a third of the cost of the GSA's original estimate. And, as Ranking Member of the Senate Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee, I worked to secure the necessary \$2.61 million.

On Thursday, at a ceremony attended by Mayor Asmundson and other local and federal leaders, I presented a check to the City of Bellingham for the \$2.61 million. I'm so proud to have helped in the effort to guarantee that this beautiful, historic building – which has always belonged to the people of Bellingham – continues to belong to them.

Mountlake Terrace: Supporting WA Jobs

On Thursday, I delivered the keynote address at the Snohomish County Workforce Development Council's Annual Awards Dinner. About 200 business, community, and government leaders attended the dinner, which recognized accomplishments in building and preserving the Snohomish County workforce. As Ranking Democrat on the Employment, Safety, and Training HELP Subcommittee, I've been proud to fund workforce programs all over our state.

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