

# ***PATTY MURRAY'S WASHINGTON VIEW***

**U.S. Senator Patty Murray's Weekly Report to the People of Washington – April 20, 2007**

## **Domestic Violence: Unlocking the Doors that Trap Victims in Abusive Situations**

On Tuesday, I introduced legislation and chaired a hearing that focused on domestic violence in the workplace. I called the hearing to examine ways to end domestic violence in the workplace and to address the economic barriers that trap victims in abusive relationships. It was the first Senate hearing on domestic violence in the workplace in 5 years.

[Read More about my Legislation and Tuesday's Hearing](#) | [Watch a Webcast of the Hearing](#)

[Yvette Cade Shares Her Story](#)

["Senate eyes help for abuse victims"](#) – Seattle Times

## **Wild Sky: After House Bill Passes, New Wilderness Area is Finally Within Reach**

On Tuesday, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Wild Sky Wilderness Act after years of barriers and frustration. With House passage, we are now on the brink of designating the first new wilderness land in Washington state in 20 years. I congratulate Representative Rick Larsen who championed this bill in the House and all the other co-sponsors who supported it. I look forward to a signing ceremony and celebration in the near future. Protecting this land is the right thing to do for our economy, our environment and future generations.

[More](#) | [Proposed Area](#)

["Wild Sky on Horizon"](#) – The Columbian

## **Veterans: Bringing Veterans Back into the VA Healthcare System**

On Wednesday, I introduced the Honor Our Commitment to Veterans Act, which would allow new Priority 8 veterans to enroll in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) healthcare system. Priority 8 veterans are those veterans with non-service-connected disabilities whose income is above a modest level that varies across the country. More than four years ago, the Bush administration cut off all Priority 8 veterans' access to the VA healthcare system. My bill would reverse that decision. It would enable over 3,000 new Priority 8 veterans in Washington state to be eligible for care. - [Details](#)

["Bill calls for all vets to get VA care"](#) – Army Times

## **Highway Safety: Examining the Alarming Increase in Highway Deaths**

On Thursday, I chaired a Senate hearing to examine the alarming trend of increased highway fatalities across the country. Since 2003, the number of annual fatalities has risen by over 3,000 to an estimated 43,400 deaths a year. At the hearing we examined many of the causes for the increase in fatalities including drunk driving, seat belt enforcement, adherence to speed limits, and ineffective compliance reviews for rogue trucking companies.

[Details](#) | [Listen to my Opening Statement](#)

## **Prescription Drugs: Republicans Block Debate on Effort to Lower RX Drugs**

On Thursday, I voted to move forward with debate on the *Medicare Fair Prescription Drug Price Act of 2007*, which would allow the federal government to negotiate drug prices with manufacturers and provide more transparency on the discounts they receive through Medicare Part D. Unfortunately, Republicans blocked a motion to move forward and consider the bill. The final vote, 55-42, fell 5 votes short of the 60 needed to move ahead.

Seniors across Washington state have shared their concerns with me over the Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Program. I will continue to work to improve the program and lower drug prices for the over 800,000 Medicare recipients in our state. Unfortunately, Senate Republicans are more interested in protecting the drug industry than in finding ways to benefit more of our seniors.

[More](#)

## **Virginia Tech: Mourning the Lives of the Victims**

I join with all Americans in expressing my shock, dismay, and heartache at the tragic events that unfolded on the campus of Virginia Tech this week. The families of the victims of this senseless act will never be the same, and as they mourn the lives of their loved ones, we mourn with them. They will long be in our thoughts and in our prayers.