

PATTY MURRAY'S WASHINGTON VIEW

U.S. Senator Patty Murray's Weekly Report to the People of Washington – July 29, 2005

Meeting Transportation Needs

As the highest-ranking Democrat on the Senate Appropriations Transportation Subcommittee, I'm proud to have secured critical federal funding for our state's transportation priorities. While this is a particularly tight budget year, and it was not easy to get the funding our state needs to create jobs, improve safety, and lay the foundation for state's future economic growth, I'm glad we've been able to get that funding and keep our state moving.

While I wish the President had placed a higher priority on transportation funding in his budget, I'm proud to have partnered with members of our state delegation to invest in our future. Projects receiving funding include:

- **King, Kitsap, and Snohomish Counties** (1st legislative district) - \$14.7 million;
- **Northwest Washington** (2nd legislative district) - over \$52 million;
- **Southwest Washington** - over \$58 million;
- **South Puget Sound region** - over \$41 million;
- **Bremerton, University Place** - \$22.85 million

Get the full story on transportation funding in this bill:
<http://murray.senate.gov/transportation>

Saving Lives, Time, and Money

Last week, I helped move forward the "Wired for Healthcare Quality Act," which will allow the use of technology to help patients get better healthcare. The bill, which was approved by the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, of which I'm a member, helps patients by reducing medical errors, increasing efficiency, improving quality, and giving doctors easier access to patient's medical records through an electronic records system.

I worked to ensure that rural providers receive the technical and financial support needed to invest in this innovative and efficient system. This allows us to expand information technology and healthcare efficiency throughout our state.

I also fought to ensure that patients have access to their own medical records, so they're more informed and more empowered to make decisions about their healthcare. The measure must now go to the full Senate for approval.

Supporting Our Military Families

September 11th and our recent military operations have impacted our entire nation, but one vulnerable group faces special burdens—our military families' children. So, on Monday, I introduced two amendments to the Department of Defense Authorization bill to address the challenges facing our soldiers' children and the schools they attend. My amendments will:

- Handle sudden changes in student enrollment;
- Ensure counseling and extra support for students; and
- Ensure affordable, quality childcare for military families.

My amendments address many of the challenges our military families face, and minimize the impact of military changes like realignment plans on local schools and students. I believe we must make sure that children are not penalized as their parents serve our country, and that's why I'm urging my colleagues to support our military families by supporting my amendments.

Sign up to get periodic updates on my work for veterans:
<http://murray.senate.gov/vetupdates>

Victory for Viaduct Funding

On Thursday, our state delegation declared victory in our efforts to secure federal funding to support replacement of the Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall in Seattle. We secured \$220 million for this project in a tough budget year, and at a time when the Administration isn't prioritizing investments in transportation.

The viaduct, which carries over 100,000 vehicles each day, plays a crucial role in the strength of our economy, the movement of people and goods, and the safety of our communities in the Puget Sound. I applaud my colleagues for working to make this investment in the viaduct so that we can protect our residents and lay the foundation for future economic growth.

Preserving WA's Natural Beauty

On Tuesday, I led the Senate in unanimously passing the bipartisan Wild Sky Wilderness bill for the third time in four years. Wild Sky designates over 106,000 acres of national forest in east Snohomish County as wilderness. By passing this bill, the Senate came closer to creating a destination for future generations to enjoy our state's natural beauty through hiking, fishing, or camping.

Unfortunately, each time this bill has passed the Senate, House Republicans have stalled it. We must overcome this obstacle so we can designate an area that would protect wildlife, promote clean water, and protect threatened species like salmon. I urge my colleagues in the House to pass this measure so our state can at last preserve its cherished wilderness for generations to come.

Get more information on my work for the Wild Sky Wilderness:
<http://murray.senate.gov/wildsky>

An Open Supreme Court Process

This week, six Democratic women senators joined me in launching an interactive Web site to engage Americans in the Supreme Court confirmation of Judge John G. Roberts, Jr. The site allows all Americans to submit questions they want Judge Roberts to answer during his upcoming Senate hearings.

In 1991, as I watched the Clarence Thomas confirmation hearings, I simply couldn't believe that this nominee was not asked about issues that I cared about. This Web site provides an outlet for all Americans to share their thoughts, questions, and concerns during this important process.

Judge Roberts has been nominated to a lifetime appointment on the highest court in the land and will influence our path on a number of issues that directly impact our rights and our lives as Americans. I want to have an open confirmation process, and I encourage all Americans to take advantage of this opportunity to have their concerns heard.

Make your voice heard on the Roberts nomination:
<http://democrats.senate.gov/askroberts>

Fighting the Scourge of Asbestos

Washington State Loses a Hero

Last weekend, our state lost one of its great heroes, Brian Harvey. Brian, an asbestos victim, had been a leading advocate in our fight against asbestos. He was a loving husband, father, grandfather, and teacher. He is my hero because he never hesitated to stand up and speak truth to power. He pushed Congress to treat victims fairly and to ban asbestos.

It's hard for me to picture the next hearing or press conference highlighting the need to ban asbestos without Brian standing by my side. But, inspired by his strength, I will continue the fight.

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