

PATTY MURRAY'S WASHINGTON VIEW

U.S. Senator Patty Murray's Weekly Report to the People of Washington January 24, 2003

COMMUNITY HEALTH CARE RESTORED

I am very pleased to announce that yesterday the full Senate voted unanimously to support my amendment to restore a \$120 million cut to a health care initiative that helps provide care to thousands in Washington state and around the country. The Community Access Program (CAP) is a community-based program that helps provide health care for the uninsured and under-insured. At a time when thousands of Washingtonians have lost their jobs and their health insurance, we simply cannot afford to put more families in jeopardy. CAP helps people get the care they need in a clinic or doctor's office – instead of in the emergency room.

Our four CAP grantees in Washington state are doing outstanding work with vulnerable populations to provide health care where we need it most.

These grantees are:

- **CHOICE Regional Health Network** (serving Thurston, Grays Harbor, Mason, Pacific, and Lewis Counties),
- **Community Choice PHCO Network**(serving Chelan, Okanogan and Douglas Counties)
- **The Health Improvement Partnership** (serving Ferry, Stevens, Pend Oreille, Lincoln and Spokane Counties),
- **"Kids Get Care" program** (serving King County),

I am relieved that the Senate joined with me to do the right thing by restoring CAP funding. This is great news for working, uninsured families who are struggling with their health care.

HONORING DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

On Monday, I helped honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s life and his legacy at the Seattle Center. I was honored to join with so many people who are committed to keeping Dr. King's dream alive every day in their daily work for equality, opportunity, and justice for all.

In the U.S. Senate – not far from where Dr. King delivered his "I Have A Dream Speech" – the struggle for equality and freedom continues. I am working to keep Dr. King's dream alive by working to ensure our nation's courts are a place where every citizen can seek and receive justice, to increase access and diversity in our colleges and universities and to support health care and education initiatives for our most vulnerable citizens, especially in a time of shortfalls and budget cuts.

For Dr. King, the challenge of tolerance and civil rights came from within our borders. Today, our challenges come both from within and abroad. Many of us face uncertainty with our jobs, our health care, and our old sense of security. We must remember how Dr. King overcame fear and uncertainty with a call for unity and brotherhood. Just as in Dr. King's day, we must not let fear undermine our love of freedom, our commitment to equal justice and our tolerance for one another.

SPENDING BILL PASSES SENATE

Late Thursday night, the Senate passed the Omnibus Appropriations bill, which includes important funding for a number of Washington state priorities. I worked closely with my Republican colleagues on the Senate Appropriations Committee to make certain that the needs of Washington's citizens were met.

Working in a bipartisan fashion, and facing \$10 billion in cuts across the board, I am pleased to have maintained federal funding for Washington state's needs.

Some Washington state projects included in the bill:

- \$2 billion for cleaning up nuclear and chemical waste at Hanford Nuclear Reservation.
- \$700 million in additional borrowing authority for the Bonneville Power Administration.
- \$225,000 to complete construction and development of the Community Technology Center in Wenatchee.
- \$2.5 million for US Highway 12 between Burbank and Walla Walla.
- \$675,000 for the Columbia Gorge Air Quality Study.
- \$2.5 million for SR99/Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seattle Seawall Replacement.
- \$1.245 million for the Northwest Straits Commission.

I am disappointed the Senate spending bill does not provide meaningful natural disaster assistance for farmers in Washington state. I voted for an amendment by Sen. Daschle that would have helped all farmers that were devastated by natural disasters in 2001 and 2002. Unfortunately, the amendment was defeated.

TRYING TO PROTECT THE AIR WE BREATHE

On Wednesday, I voted to delay a Bush Administration plan to weaken clean air protections by making it easier for industrial polluters to increase emissions without installing new pollution control equipment. Unfortunately, the Senate voted 50-46 against delaying the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) new air quality rules, which are expected to be finalized by March 2003.

Clean air and a clean environment should not be a partisan issue – we should all agree that a clean environment is essential to the quality of life for every American.