

PATTY MURRAY'S WASHINGTON VIEW

U.S. Senator Patty Murray's Weekly Report to the People of Washington – May 6, 2005

Fighting for Our Veterans

From the Battlefield to the Homefront – On Monday in Seattle and on Wednesday in Spokane, I met with veterans to discuss strategies for helping new veterans re-adjust to life at home after they serve. I know the transition from war to home has always been a burden for the soldiers and their families. It was tough for my family when my dad came back from fighting in World War II. And just last month, during my trip to Baghdad and Kuwait, I saw the concern in soldiers' eyes as they talked with excitement and anxiety about their return home.

Keep the Walla Walla VA Open – Another big part of caring for our returning service men and women is making sure they have access to the specialized care that VA facilities provide. I've successfully fought for the past two years to save the Vancouver, American Lake, and Walla Walla VA hospitals from being closed.

Part of the agreement to keep the Walla Walla facility open was to conduct a study of how to continue to provide care in a cost-effective manner. I secured \$250,000 for that study and have been in constant contact with the Local Advisory Panel charged with helping make recommendations on land use and other questions critical to the hospital's future. On Wednesday, I spoke at the first of five Local Advisory Panel meetings at the Wainwright VA Medical Center; I look forward to facilitating the panel's important work in order to allow this hospital to continue serving our veterans.

Sign up to get my veterans' update:
<http://murray.senate.gov/vetupdates>

Defending WA Aerospace Jobs

On Thursday, I met with about 100 Boeing Machinists in Seattle to update them on the fight for America's aerospace jobs. I congratulated them on the 787 and recognized the many sacrifices workers have made to land it. I also warned them that Airbus is going to new lengths to take away their jobs by subsidizing Airbus planes, deceiving Members of Congress, and trying to weasel their way into American defense contracts. So, I'm leading a three-pronged fight for our aerospace workers.

1. Stop the Subsidies: First, I'm working to stop the subsidies that European governments shower on Airbus. Last month, I worked to pass a resolution that calls on Europe to stop subsidizing Airbus. European governments are poised to provide launch aid for the A350. We can't let that happen. Last week, I supported the confirmation of our new U.S. Trade Representative, Robert Portman, and I look forward to working with him to make sure Europe finally stops the subsidies that kill American jobs.

2. Exposing Airbus's Lies: Second, I'm working to debunk Airbus's false claims that it creates American jobs and that it is an American company. Despite Airbus's PR campaign, elected leaders need to see Airbus for what it is: a subsidized European company that kills American aerospace jobs.

3. Airbus Trades with America's Enemies: Third, I'm working to show that Airbus does not care about American workers or American security. For example, NBC News caught Airbus officials at an air show in Iran – trying to sell military helicopters to a U.S. enemy.

Don't Cut Support for America's Airports – On Monday, I urged more than 2,000 airport leaders and officials to pressure Congress to fund aviation improvements. I spoke at the annual meeting of the American Association of Airport Executives in Seattle. I warned that the Bush Administration is cutting funding for airport improvements and for modern air traffic control equipment. The White House also wants to provide

airports with less help installing explosive detection equipment. The FAA projects that air travel will increase. I believe we need to have the infrastructure in place at our airports to accommodate these new demands.

Get more on my work to save American aerospace jobs:
<http://murray.senate.gov/aerospace>

Don't Privatize Social Security

People Depend on Social Security – I continue to fight attempts to privatize Social Security. On Thursday, I held a roundtable on Social Security in Tacoma at the Lighthouse Senior Center. We heard from 3 local residents who reflect how Social Security is critical to people of all ages. One person was a senior citizen who is unable to work because of epilepsy. The disability payments he gets from Social Security are his only source of income. Another speaker, in her 20s, said she wants to make sure that her generation can count on the guaranteed benefits Social Security provides. Our third panelist, a retired senior, said she wants to make sure Social Security is around for her children and grandchildren.

Challenging Administration Plans - Last week I posed tough questions to Treasury Secretary John Snow about the President's proposals to privatize Social Security. Given the unpredictability of the stock market in recent years, I think more of us now appreciate the stability and certainty that Social Security provides.

Read more about my work to keep Social Security strong:
<http://murray.senate.gov/ss>

Working to Expand Healthcare Access

Our nation faces a healthcare crisis, with 44 million Americans uninsured. Though I'm very proud of our state's leadership in providing coverage under Medicare and Medicaid, there is still much work to be done. This week, as part of my continuing work to get care for those who need it, I delivered three speeches on healthcare issues.

Cover Poor Children - On Monday, I joined Senator John Kerry (D-Mass.) at a town hall meeting in Seattle to talk about Kids First, a bill that would allow our state to ensure every child. Sen. Kerry's bill would give every state in the nation the funding needed to provide insurance coverage to all children. By filling the gaps in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program, Kids First would provide our children with the care they need to follow their dreams. I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this bill (S. 114).

Children Need Early Care and Education – As a former preschool teacher, I know that the early years are the most important years for our children. At the 25th annual Infant and Early Childhood Education Conference on Thursday in Bellevue, I updated the people who work so hard for our children on what's happening at the federal level when it comes to these crucial programs. I filled them in on my fight to protect Medicaid from arbitrary and damaging cuts proposed by the administration and congressional Republicans; the upcoming reauthorization of Head Start, and the recent reauthorization of IDEA.

Making WA the Healthiest State – On Friday, I addressed the Washington Health Foundation's 11th annual Healthy Communities Colloquium. This forum aims to make Washington the healthiest state in the nation. The three pillars of my approach when it comes to healthcare are affordability, access, and innovation. This means strengthening Medicare and Medicaid and supporting programs like Telehealth that allow us to provide care to people regardless of where they live.

Read more about my work to address the healthcare crisis:
<http://murray.senate.gov/healthcare>

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