

PATTY MURRAY'S WASHINGTON VIEW

U.S. Senator Patty Murray's Weekly Report to the People of Washington – July 21, 2006

Great News for Veterans Statewide

Yesterday, I got a series of new commitments from VA Secretary Jim Nicholson to help Washington's veterans.

Walla Walla WILL Have a Formal Role in VA Plans

The Secretary gave me his commitment that the Walla Walla community will have a direct and official role in determining the future of the Wainwright campus. Specifically, he agreed to send his proposal to the Local Advisory Panel. I appreciate his commitment, and I'm going to hold him to it.

I'm also pleased that he's agreed to sit down with me so we can talk about what services will be provided at the new facility. I made it clear that mental healthcare, rehab and nursing home care are not adequately available in communities around Walla Walla, and we need to see how he'll provide that care to veterans under his proposal.

Details: <http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=258987>

New Clinic in Northwest Washington

During a campaign stop in Bellingham two weeks ago, Secretary Nicholson announced a new clinic to serve veterans in Northwest Washington. But since then, I've been able to get very few details from the VA. Yesterday, I pressed the Secretary and got some clear answers. He confirmed that a new clinic would be opened to serve veterans in Northwest Washington. He said that a location has not been chosen, but it would be somewhere between Seattle and the Canadian border. He said they plan to pick a location before the end of the year and that it would then open about six months later.

In a separate move this week, I added language to a bill that calls on the VA to move forward with new clinics in Northwest Washington and Centralia.

Funding to Replace VA Nursing Home in Puget Sound

Currently, 70 veterans at the VA nursing home at American Lake (Tacoma) are housed in an earthquake-damaged building that could collapse if there's another earthquake. That's why this week I worked to secure \$38 million to build a new VA nursing home and Alzheimer's ward in Tacoma. I got the funding, but there is a big hurdle over approval that will need to be resolved before we can build the safe, modern facility our veterans deserve.

Details: <http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=259090>

Veterans Healthcare Funding – UP 12 Percent

This week a Senate committee approved a bill I've been working on to increase funding veterans healthcare by 12 percent. Next the bill must be passed on the Senate floor.

The funding is badly needed because the VA is overwhelmed and unable to provide timely care. For example, our 4-state region ranks worst in the nation in providing a doctor's appointment within 30 days of the desired date.

Details: <http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=259126>

Get Veterans Updates:

Be the first to know. Sign up for my Veterans Alerts here:

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

531 New Defense Jobs for Washington

This week I announced that a Senate committee has approved a bill that will help Washington state companies supply innovative products to our military. I'm proud to provide the funding that will support our troops in the field and create more than 500 high-skill, high-wage jobs here at home. Washington state companies are already seeing their technologies save lives in Iraq and Afghanistan. With this funding, we'll be able to do even more to bring more of our soldiers, sailors and airmen home safely to their families. Details:

<http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=259109>

Supporting Our Military Bases

This week I announced committee passage of \$390 million in funding to support Washington military facilities including: Fort Lewis, Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Naval Station Everett, Fairchild Air Force Base, and Sub Base Bangor. The Fort Lewis funding (which was not provided by the House of Representatives) will support a third Stryker brigade.

More: <http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=259086>

Transportation Funding for WA

Also this week, a Senate committee passed the bill I helped write to fund \$166 million in transportation and economic development investments throughout our state.

Puget Sound: <http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=259063>

Central - <http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=259081>

Olympic - <http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=259068>

Northwest - <http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=259073>

Southwest - <http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=259065>

Eastern - <http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=259080>

Full Story: <http://www.murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=259053>

Healthcare, Workforce & Education

This week I secured over \$7.3 million for critical investments in workplace, healthcare, and education priorities throughout Washington state. The funding was included in the Labor, HHS, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill. The funding will get health care initiatives off the ground, bring new technology to existing programs, and support workforce training programs.

Tri-Cities - <http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=259124>

Olympia - <http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=259122>

Northwest - <http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=259120>

Eastern - <http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=259117>

Seattle - <http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=259113>

Central - <http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=259110>

Southwest - <http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=259112>

Other News:

Senate Passes Voting Rights Extension – Yesterday I voted to extend portions of the Voting Rights Act. The Senate version did not include any of the controversial amendments that would have weakened the protections of the original law. It passed 98-0.

Victory! Amtrak Jobs will Not Be Shipped Overseas – This week a key Senate Committee agreed with Senator Byrd and me that Amtrak directors should abandon their plan to move call center jobs overseas. As I work to ensure Amtrak's future, I want to make sure that it benefits not just our passengers but also our working families and communities.

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