



▲ Rep. Levin speaks with students about legislative issues.

Representing the 12th Congressional District of Michigan

## The Congressional Connector

Week of April 28 – May 2, 2008

### **Economic Stimulus Rebates Start Going Out - More Action Needed**

More than 4.5 million Michigan households are expected to receive rebates, injecting \$3.8 billion into our state and national economies. The rebates come as a result of a bipartisan agreement reached in February in which Congress agreed to provide rebate checks of up to \$600 per individual and \$1200 per married couple, plus an additional \$300 per child in order to stimulate the economy.

Many in Congress are calling for additional steps to help the economy and American families. Rep. Levin supports action to address the housing crisis, reduce soaring gas prices, ensure access to student loans, and immediately extend unemployment benefits for those looking for work during these difficult economic times. Rep. Levin was recently interviewed on Detroit Public Radio's program, Detroit Today. To listen to the interview, [click here](#).

### **House Approves Bill to Protect Great Lakes**

On April 24, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly approved legislation [H.R. 2830, the Coast Guard Authorization] that included strong new protections to help keep invasive species out of the Great Lakes. Over the years, a large number of aquatic invaders – including the zebra mussel – have become established in the Great Lakes by hitching a ride in the ballast water of ocean-going vessels. The House-passed bill seeks to eliminate invasive species from ballast water that is discharged into U.S. waters by the year 2015. It would require all ships entering U.S. waters to conduct ballast water exchange at least 200 miles off the nation's coastline. Between now and the end of 2013, the legislation requires vessels to be fitted with effective ballast water treatment equipment.

Speaking in favor of the measure, Rep. Levin said, "Invasive aquatic species pose a clear and present danger to virtually every U.S. waterway and coastal area. Many more invasive species will arrive in rapid succession and spread within U.S. waters unless effective measures are taken to prevent them." The next step for H.R. 2830 is consideration by the full Senate. For more information, [click here](#).

### **Lawmakers Introduce Bill to Address Troubled Home Loans**

On April 17, in response to the nationwide economic downturn caused by the housing and credit crisis, legislation [H.R. 5830] was introduced to combat the unprecedented rise in foreclosures and help struggling homeowners refinance their mortgages. The bill would allow the Federal Housing Administration to insure up to \$300 billion in new loans to help borrowers at risk of foreclosure refinance into viable mortgages. The new insurance would be offered only if lenders agree to accept 85% of the home's current value as payment in full. While lenders would take a loss by accepting less than the full amount of the original loan, the costs of foreclosure for lenders is almost always greater.

H.R. 5830 was introduced by the Chairman of the House Financial Services Committee, Rep. Frank of Massachusetts, and the Committee is in the process of marking up the legislation. Rep. Levin is a cosponsor of this bill. For additional information, [click here](#).

### **Rep. Levin Schedules Online Town Hall and Telephone Town Hall for Next Week.**

Rep. Levin will host another online town hall on Tuesday, May 6th from 2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. Questions can be submitted in advance or during the online session. Also, on Wednesday, May 7th from 6:15 p.m. to 7:15 p.m. Rep. Levin will host another telephone town hall. These sessions provide residents the opportunity to ask questions live over the phone with Mr. Levin and other residents of the 12th District. More information to follow.