

# ***PATTY MURRAY'S WASHINGTON VIEW***

**U.S. Senator Patty Murray's Weekly Report to the People of Washington April 4, 2003**

## **HELPING AIRLINE INDUSTRY WORKERS**

There is no question that these are challenging times for our airline industry. Fallout from September 11<sup>th</sup>, the economic downturn, wartime travel anxiety, and new concerns over the spread of the SARS virus are all taking their toll on an already weakened industry and its workers.

Airlines are emerging from bankruptcy just as others are entering it, and still others are desperately trying to avoid it. Since the war in Iraq began, 10,000 more aviation workers have lost their jobs, while airline bookings are down between 20-40 percent. Orders for new airplanes have fallen. Our airlines, our airports, and especially our aviation workers need help now.

That's why this week I authored an amendment to help the men and women in the aviation industry, including the 35,000 Boeing workers who have lost their jobs. My aviation workers amendment will provide 26 additional weeks of unemployment assistance for as many as 200,000 workers nationwide. The amendment was added to an airline assistance package in the War Supplemental bill that the full Senate approved on Thursday night.

Now the Senate bill will go to a conference with the House bill to reconcile differences between the two. Unfortunately, the House version of the War Supplemental does not include badly needed aid for workers.

I am very concerned by reports that the White House says the airline assistance is too large, and I am even more concerned that the House members could strip out the worker provision.

That's why I have reached out to my Republican Senate colleagues to send a bipartisan letter to the President asking him to support my aviation workers assistance package in the conference committee.

I will continue to work to ensure that unemployed workers in Washington state and across the country get the help they need. While Congress provides assistance to the airlines, it cannot turn its back on the workers.

## **MAJOR CONTRACT AWARDED TO PORT ORCHARD COMPANY**

This week I was pleased to announce that the Coast Guard has awarded a \$145 million contract to SAFE Boats International of Port Orchard to build up to 700 new response boats. The 25' fast response boats will replace older boats as the standard for the Coast Guard's new anti-terror "SWAT teams."

The Coast Guard "SWAT Teams" were conceived after the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks to provide quick response to terrorist threats in our nation's busiest seaports. As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I ensured that one of the four teams was based in the Puget Sound.

SAFE Boats will produce all of the new boats at their manufacturing facility in Port Orchard.

I congratulate SAFE Boats International on securing this important contract. At a time when our economy is struggling, this contract will provide good family-wage jobs and increased business for Port Orchard. In the short term, this contract will bring needed construction jobs to the region – giving our local economy a much-needed shot in the arm. And in the long term, it will be an important addition to our homeland security plan – providing a critical asset to help keep our communities safe.

## **PROTECTING WHEAT FARMERS**

By a vote of 66-27, the Senate passed an amendment that I authored with Sen. Herb Kohl (D-Wisc.) to provide an additional \$600 million for emergency humanitarian food needs in Iraq and address improper management of the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust. The amendment was adopted as part of the \$80 billion Supplemental Appropriations bill to pay for the Iraq War.

Our amendment addresses concerns over the Administration's food aid policies, including a drastically low estimate of the food assistance needed to feed the Iraqi people, and improper management of the Emerson Humanitarian Trust. The Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust is a food reserve administered under the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture. This reserve is available to meet emergency humanitarian food needs in developing countries, allowing the United States to respond to unanticipated food crises with U.S. commodities.

The Senate's action is a major step forward in ensuring that the United States meets its commitments to the Iraqi people in a way that helps – not hurts – America's farmers.

## **DEMANDING EPA ACTION**

Last week, I was joined by Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-N.Y.) in renewing our call for EPA to conduct a public education campaign to warn homeowners about Zonolite. Zonolite is a brand of insulation produced from ore mined in Libby, Montana that contains a particularly lethal form of asbestos.

In Washington state alone, over 53,000 homes contain Zonolite insulation. For the sake of homeowners throughout the country, the EPA must inform the public about the hazards of asbestos-tainted insulation. The health and safety of the American people is too important to wait.

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