

PATTY MURRAY'S WASHINGTON VIEW

U.S. Senator Patty Murray's Weekly Report to the People of Washington – September 12, 2003

REMEMBERING 9/11

Last night I attended a candlelight vigil in Seattle to remember the victims of September 11th. Like all Americans, I will never forget where I was on that day, and I will never forget the way our country responded. In the face of great tragedy, America responded with courage. We came together and united as one.

We were inspired by images of heroism shown by firefighters at Ground Zero. We saluted the men and women of our armed forces who traveled half way around the world to pursue justice.

In one moment, we all understood how fragile life can be and immediately lined up to donate time, money and blood to help people we had never met. And we learned that although New York and Washington, D.C. are thousands of miles from our state, we are united by a common bond.

Since that time, we have worked to protect each other. We have taken steps to improve security at home and abroad and to prevent another tragedy. And while much has been done, there is still much yet to do.

I will continue to fight for resources for our troops abroad and for our first responders here at home. I will continue to insist on the resources necessary to protect our airports, borders and waterways.

I will also continue to stand up for the freedoms for which our country stands.

One of our most cherished freedoms is the freedom to disagree honestly and respectfully. This bedrock freedom of our democracy sets the United States apart from many other countries, including those who sponsor terrorism – and it is what our troops have fought and died for abroad. We recognize that diversity of opinion is America's greatest strength.

Finally, we cannot forget that for many families September 11th isn't just a day of national loss, but of personal loss. My thoughts and prayers go out to everyone who has lost a friend or loved one. Your loss is our loss, and you are forever in our hearts.

INCREASED FUNDING FOR HISPANIC EDUCATION

On Wednesday the Senate increased funding for Latino students as part of its Labor, Health and Human Services (LHHS) Appropriations bill, which funds education. Hispanics are the nation's largest minority group, yet only 22 percent are enrolled in post-secondary studies. Despite these statistics, many programs that specifically benefit Latino students had been eliminated or significantly reduced in the LHHS bill.

I was proud to co-sponsor the Hispanic Educational Opportunities Act to help restore resources for Latino students. The amendment expands Head Start programs for the children of migrant and seasonal working families and increases funding for English language acquisition programs, tutoring, mentoring and financial aid.

Supporting Latino education tells a generation of young students that they can succeed and that our country believes in them.

While the original Hispanic Educational Opportunities Act was defeated on a party-line vote, I was able to help restore \$10 million for Hispanic Education for the following initiatives:

- **Title III Language Assistance State Grants, \$4 million** – This program provides grants to states to implement programs for English language learner students under Title III of the No Child Left Behind Act.
- **Migrant Education, \$500,000** – Migrant education provides grants to states to implement programs for migrant students under No Child Left Behind.
- **High School Equivalency Programs (HEP), \$3 million** – HEPs provide services to migrant children to help them complete high school.
- **College Assistance Migrant Programs (CAMP), \$500,000** – CAMPs provide services to migrant children to help them attend and graduate from college.
- **Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), \$1 million** – HSIs graduate approximately half of all Hispanic college degree holders.
- **Parent Assistance Programs, \$1 million** – Authorized in the No Child Left Behind Act, the Parent Assistance programs support community-based efforts to help parents understand their responsibilities and options under that law.

A VICTORY FOR AMERICA'S WORKERS

On Wednesday, the Senate approved an amendment I co-sponsored to protect the overtime pay of millions of Americans. Right now, the Administration is trying to change to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) so that as many as 8 million workers would lose their overtime pay protection under current law.

Currently, the FLSA requires employers to pay their employees time-and-a-half for overtime work, but provides a narrow exception for salaried workers in executive, administrative and professional jobs. The Labor Department's proposal would broaden the definition of what kinds of jobs qualify as management. This would allow employers to "promote" hourly wage earners to management, thereby disqualifying those workers from collecting overtime.

The Economic Policy Institute's analysis of DOL's proposed rule found that more than 8 million workers could lose their overtime eligibility. Affected workers include nurses, emergency medical technicians, police officers, firefighters, secretaries, sales reps, surveyors, journalists, paralegals, retail managers, dental hygienists, and many others.

In this uncertain economy, punishing workers by taking away their overtime pay makes no sense at all. While the U.S. Senate has stood up for workers, the legislation must still go to a House-Senate conference committee before it becomes law. I hope that my House colleagues will respect America's workers and allow people to get paid for the overtime hours they work.

To subscribe, unsubscribe, or change your email address, visit: <http://murray.senate.gov/updates>