

# PATTY MURRAY'S WASHINGTON VIEW

U.S. Senator Patty Murray's Weekly Report to the People of Washington – May 7, 2004

## Defending U.S. Aerospace Workers

On Wednesday, I delivered a major speech on the Senate floor calling for our government to wake up to Europe's unlimited assault on America's aerospace workers.



I titled my speech, "Will the last aerospace worker leaving America turn out the lights?" to show that the job losses Seattle has experienced – captured in a 1971 billboard – are now sweeping the country.

I've been troubled by Europe's market-distorting actions in commercial aerospace for many years, and I've been raising my concerns with other Senators, foreign leaders, and Administrations of both parties.

In Wednesday's speech, I detailed my concerns before the full Senate because EADS (European Aeronautics Defense and Space Company) and Airbus have launched a deceptive PR and lobbying campaign to convince the U.S. government that it is essentially an American company. The Airbus campaign of half-truths is on full display as the company works overtime in Washington, D.C. to re-create a competition they already lost to build the next generation refueling tanker for the Air Force.

I also warned in my speech that unless we wake up to this threat, we will lose an industry that Americans created and that has brought innovation to every corner of our economy. We Americans led the first century of flight, but we might not even have a role in the second century if we keep sleepwalking down this dangerous road.

I also outlined three steps we must take. First, we should hold Europe accountable for its market-distorting actions. Second, we should not reward EADS and Airbus for their deceptive, job-killing behavior. Finally, we should implement the recommendations from the Commission on the Future of the U.S. Aerospace Industry. I will take the first step by introducing legislation to create a Joint Committee on aerospace.

### **Speech Text & Chart:**

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

### **Watch the Speech:**

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

### **Get aerospace updates:**

<http://murray.senate.gov/aerospace/aero-updates.cfm>

## Protecting Overtime Pay

This week I voted to protect the overtime pay of American workers. For the past year, I have been fighting the Administration's attempts to deprive millions of American of their overtime pay. Last month the Administration released

the final details of its misguided overtime plan. On Tuesday, I joined with other Senators to pass an amendment (the Harkin Amendment) to preserve overtime pay for over 100,000 nurses, police, pre-school teachers, and veterans in the Pacific Northwest. Our fight is not over, and I will remain vigilant in case the Administration tries to resurrect its failed policy.

## Victory for Veterans

On Thursday, I met with Secretary of Veterans' Affairs Anthony Principi, and he told me that the VA has heeded our calls to save the Walla Walla VA Medical Center, which serves the region's 69,000 veterans. That means we have been successful in saving all three of the Washington state VA hospitals that the Administration planned to close.

Last July, I learned that the Administration wanted to shutter medical centers at American Lake, Vancouver, and Walla Walla. I began organizing meetings, writing letters, making phone calls and working with local veterans and community leaders.

On July 30, 2003, Secretary Principi called to tell me that American Lake would not be closed. On February 13, 2004, the Vancouver VA was spared. And this week, Walla Walla was saved. Thanks to the strong, organized voice of the community, I saw that commitment firsthand at a field hearing I held in Walla Walla on April 12, 2004. After the hearing I wrote to Secretary Principi and shared the comments and letter of community leaders.

And last week, I sent a personal, hand-written note to the President urging him to withdraw the Administration's recommendation for closure. The President was scheduled to review the CARES Commission report with Secretary Principi last week. Ultimately, the needs of veterans won out, and I am glad the President and Secretary Principi made the right judgment in keeping the Walla Walla facility open.

As the daughter of a World War II veteran and as the first woman to serve on the Senate Veterans' Affairs committee, I am honored to stand up for our state's 700,000 veterans.

Today, on the heels of our victory, I wrote a letter to Dr. Leslie Burger, Director of Veterans' Integrated Service Network 20, to invite him to join me in community discussions to determine how to proceed toward a positive solution that cares for our veterans in the region, creates a partnership with the local community, and meets the VA's needs. I look forward to these discussions.

### **For more on the issue and the decision:**

<http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=221231>

### **To get veterans' updates:**

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

### **Saving Washington's VA hospitals – a timeline:**

<http://murray.senate.gov/veterans/PM-CARES-Timeline.pdf>

## Seattle-Area Events Today

**Seattle Propeller Club/Chamber of Commerce** – I received the Puget Sound Elected Person of the Year award for being a strong supporter of maritime and cruise-related industries.

**Nursing Retention Symposium** – I'm proud to have secured over \$1 million in federal grants to help retain skilled nurses in hospitals and long-term care facilities in our state. I was updated on how the funding is improving our healthcare.

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