

PATTY MURRAY'S WASHINGTON VIEW

U.S. Senator Patty Murray's Weekly Report to the People of Washington –May 7, 2007

Iraq: With Veto, Bush Stubbornly Ignores the Will of the American People

Last week, the President failed our troops, our veterans and the American people by refusing to heed the call for a change of course in Iraq. His stubborn refusal to accept the facts on the ground and the desires of the majority of the American people is deeply disappointing. The bill we sent him provided a new path forward in Iraq, enhanced support for our troops, desperately needed care for veterans, and a lifeline to farmers and victims of Hurricane Katrina. [More](#)

Immediately after the veto I discussed the need to change course in Iraq on **PBS's News Hour with Jim Lehrer**.

[Watch](#) | [Read Transcript](#)

Veterans: Pushing for Answers on VA Bonuses

Last week, I was shocked and dismayed to learn that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) had awarded \$3.8 million in bonuses to VA officials at a time when the VA is failing to take proper care of our nation's veterans. The payments included a \$33,000 payment to the Deputy Undersecretary for Benefits, who manages a disability benefits system with a backlog that forces veterans to wait an average of 177 days to get the benefits they deserve.

In response to the news of these unwarranted bonuses, I asked a top VA health official, Dr. Michael Kussman, to investigate the issue. I will also be raising the issue at a VA hearing next week at which Dr. Kussman will appear.

['Money Is Going to the Wrong Spot'](#) – ABC News

Drug Safety: Returning FDA to the Gold Standard of Safety and Effectiveness

Last Wednesday, I delivered a speech on the Senate floor in support of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Reauthorization bill that is currently being debated in the Senate. The bill builds on previous legislation and includes innovative new policies that are aimed at returning the FDA to its status as the gold standard in drug safety and effectiveness. In the speech, I outlined how the bill will create a system to actively monitor drugs after they enter the market place, improve the public's access to drug information, strengthen oversight, and ensure that drugs are approved in a timely manner. [More](#)

Housing: Shining a Light on a Growing Problem

Last Thursday, I held a hearing of a Senate Appropriations Subcommittee that I chair to look at the Fiscal Year 2008 Budget of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). With housing prices on the rise, affordable housing is a challenge facing more and more American families. I have repeatedly worked to address this mounting problem, which because of a lack of public discourse has become a silent epidemic. Most recently, I convened a [roundtable](#) on affordable housing in the Puget Sound region. HUD Secretary Alphonso Jackson testified at the Thursday's hearing. [More](#)

[Read](#) my latest housing update

Sign up to receive my housing update [here](#).

WA Brave Soldiers: Meeting Face to Face with our State's Heroes

Last Friday, I traveled to Madigan Army Hospital at Fort Lewis Army Base in Tacoma. The visit gave me the opportunity to talk with soldiers and their families about the challenges they face at home, overseas, and in acquiring the care they need. Our conversations were candid and provided the first-hand experiences that help me bring their needs back to Washington, D.C. I look forward to continuing my work to provide our troops and veterans with the benefits and care they have been promised and so rightfully deserve.