

PATTY MURRAY'S WASHINGTON VIEW

U.S. Senator Patty Murray's Weekly Report to the People of Washington – September 10, 2007

Veterans: A Historic Increase in Veterans Funding

On Thursday, I helped pass a major spending increase for the care of our nation's veterans through the Senate. The bill includes \$3.6 billion more than President Bush has called for and is \$10 billion more than what was allotted for veterans last year. This historic increase comes at a time when those who have served us are facing difficulties getting the benefits and care they have earned. Among other things, the bill will help to reduce long benefits waiting lines, produce better prosthetics, and will expand access to desperately needed mental health care.

[Details](#)

[Read](#) a speech I delivered supporting this bill

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Military: Making a Big Investment in State Military Installations

The spending legislation I helped pass in the Senate on Thursday also included \$635.2 million for military construction projects located throughout Washington state. This funding will help improve our service members' quality of life, enhance training, and invest in the facilities that many communities throughout our state rely on.

[Details](#)

["Senate approves military spending"](#) – Seattle Times

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Education: College to Become More Affordable, Accessible for WA State Students

On Friday, I helped pass a bill in the Senate that will allow more Washington state students and their families to afford college. The landmark legislation will help students by increasing Pell Grants, cutting student loan interest rates in half, capping monthly loan payments, and funding various specialized grant programs.

[Details](#)

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Puget Sound: Working to Fund the Best Conservation Plans

On Friday, I joined with Senator Maria Cantwell to introduce legislation that will set up a competitive grant program to fund conservation plans that reduce soil erosion and improve water quality in the Puget Sound area. The bill will award \$5 million each year for the best plans that agricultural producers can use to protect the Puget Sound.

[Details](#)

["Congress OKs lower rate on student loans"](#) – Seattle Times

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Food and Workplace Safety: Protecting Workers and Consumers from Chemical Used in Artificial Flavoring

On Friday, I joined with Senator Edward Kennedy in sending letters to the Centers for Disease Control, the Food and Drug Administration, and the Department of Labor that outlined our concerns with the risks of diacetyl, a chemical found in artificial flavorings. Diacetyl is commonly used in the artificial butter flavoring found in microwave popcorn. Workers in some factories that produce artificial butter flavoring have been diagnosed with a very serious lung condition.

[Details](#)

["Groups Urge Limits on Popcorn Additive"](#) - AP