

PATTY MURRAY'S WASHINGTON VIEW

U.S. Senator Patty Murray's Weekly Report to the People of Washington – February 4, 2008

Economy: Working to Jumpstart our Economy, Help Struggling Families

Last week, I worked to put together the Senate version of an economic stimulus package that will bring short-term help to our economy and to families struggling to pay bills. I am working to ensure that the package moves forward quickly and contains help for seniors, veterans, and the unemployed. I am also working to make sure that rebate checks go to the people who need them most – middle and low income families.

Last Thursday, I delivered a speech on the Senate floor on the stimulus package and the need to invest in our long-term economic security here at home. - [Details](#) | [Video](#) - I discuss the stimulus package.

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State of the Union: Budget is True Statement of Priorities

Last Monday (1/28) President Bush delivered a State of the Union speech that contained lofty rhetoric about helping the American people through the challenges of the upcoming year. However, the President's actual efforts toward putting America first, repairing our economy, and helping working families fall short in his budget. - [Details](#) | [Video](#) - I discuss the need for a Budget that invests in America.

["Northwest Democrats Unimpressed by Bush Speech"](#) - AP

[President Expected to Cut Funding for Emergency Responders, Homeland Security](#)

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Army Suicides: Suicides Continue to Rise as Stress and Strain on Soldiers Continues

Last week, distressing numbers were revealed in an internal Army report that showed that Army suicides rose by nearly 20 percent last year. The statistics revealed that 121 Army soldiers had taken their lives and that many more had attempted suicide. On Thursday, [I wrote to Secretary of Defense Robert Gates](#), whom I have talked to on this subject before, to see what more can be done to stem the tide of this frightening trend. I am deeply troubled that the stress and strain of long and repeated deployments is taking to great a toll on our brave men and women. - [Details](#)

I also examined this issue in December of last year – ["Suspected Army Suicides Set Record"](#) – USA Today

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Northern Border: We Need a More Secure System that Doesn't Hurt Businesses and Communities

Last week, in defiance of many in Congress, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) began instituting new identification requirements along the northern border. The new requirements disallow the use of state-issued licenses without also producing a passport or birth certificate. Birth certificates, as DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff has acknowledged in the past, come in many forms and are susceptible to forgery. [I wrote to Secretary Chertoff](#) along with a bi-partisan group of northern border Senators to urge him to suspend the new requirements until a secure system that takes into account the needs of our northern border businesses and communities can be instituted. On Thursday, DHS acknowledged that there will be an unspecified grace period for travelers without the proper documents. - [Details](#)

[Video](#) – I discuss the need for a secure and improved border system.

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