

PATTY MURRAY'S WASHINGTON VIEW

U.S. Senator Patty Murray's Weekly Report to the People of Washington – March 26, 2004

Doctors, Senators Join My Call to Ban Asbestos

This week I joined with Sen. Harry Reid (D-Nev.), Sen. Mark Dayton (D-Minn), two doctors, and dozens of asbestos victims and family members to urge Congress to improve the asbestos-liability bill that will be brought to the Senate floor next month.

Asbestos is taking a terrible toll in our state, which ranks 8th nationally in the number asbestos related deaths. King County has the fourth-highest number of deaths related to asbestos in the country. Three other counties – Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish - all rank in the top 100 for asbestos-related deaths.

For the past three years, I have led the effort in Congress to ban asbestos, increase public awareness, and improve research and treatment for patients with asbestos-related diseases. My bill, the Ban Asbestos in America Act, would:

- Ban asbestos in the United States,
- Educate the public & workers about the its risks,
- Improve research and treatment for asbestos disease victims,
- Expand EPA's blue ribbon panel to better protect the public.

Last year, I got the first part of my bill added to the Senate's asbestos liability proposal, and now I'm working to add the rest. Read my speech and statements from doctors here: <http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=219617>

Trying to Help Victims of Domestic Violence

This week I tried to give victims of domestic violence new ways to escape violent relationships. I offered an amendment that would have knocked down the economic barriers that trap women and children in abusive relationships. My proposal was endorsed by the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the Washington State Coalition Against DV, and the Family Violence Prevention Fund.

In my floor speech, I shared real stories from victims who were fired from their jobs and denied unemployment benefits because they tried to go to court to get a restraining order. I talked about how abusers often try to get their victims fired from their jobs so they will become even more dependent on their abuser.

My amendment:

- Offered emergency leave so a victim can go to court or to the police to stop abuse
- Ended insurance and employment discrimination
- Provided help for children who witness abuse
- Offered access to health care for victims
- Improved the way health care providers screen for domestic violence

Opponents claimed that my amendment was not relevant to the Senate's debate. They also said it was not the "right time" to help victims. Those are the kinds of excuses that victims have heard for years. I've been trying to pass my legislation for three years, but it never seems to be the right time to help battered women. Sadly, my amendment was defeated on a partisan vote, 46-53. I've been to the shelters. I've looked the women in the eyes. I have promised them I will not forget, and

I will not. I'm going to keep fighting until we do the right thing and help women and children escape the violence they confront everyday. **Read My Remarks:**
<http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=219659>

EU vs. Microsoft

This week, the European Commission (EU) ruled that Microsoft was in violation of antitrust laws. This ruling punishes Microsoft for creative innovation. In the end, consumers could suffer the most from a loss in new technology that may never be brought to market. Wednesday, I urged the Administration to work to bring the Commission back to the table and settle the issues consistent with the work of the Department of Justice and the U.S. Courts.

Boeing vs. Airbus

This week, I wrote to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld about my growing concerns that Airbus is trying to kill the Boeing 767 tanker deal. Recently, Airbus has resorted to a campaign of distortion and half-truths to derail the tanker deal. If Airbus' campaign succeeds, thousands of American manufacturing jobs could ultimately be outsourced to a foreign corporation that is unfairly subsidized by European governments. I urged Secretary Rumsfeld to resist unnecessary delays that could jeopardize the safety of our troops and our ability to project military force.
<http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=219428>

WA Veterans Come to Congress

On Thursday, I attended a joint hearing of the Senate and House Veterans Affairs Committees, where we heard testimony from leading veterans' service organizations. I introduced former Seattleite Ed Chow (the National Vice President of Vietnam Veterans of America) and recognized other Washington leaders including WDVA Director John King, MOAA Washington State President Heinz Haskins, and Maurice Sharp, past National Commander of the American Ex-Prisoners of War.

Honored by America's Ports . . .

On Tuesday I was honored to be named "**Port Person of the Year**" by the American Association of Port Authorities. The award was presented by officials from the ports of Seattle, Tacoma, Everett and New York/New Jersey.

I know that our ports are economic engines, and I've been proud to stand up for port security, channel improvements, infrastructure, and freight mobility. As I told America's port directors, I will continue to make sure we are protecting our citizens, protecting our communities, and maintaining the efficient commerce system that supports jobs and our economy.

Read My Remarks:

<http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=219532>

. . . And by Columbia River Leaders

Last Saturday, the Columbia River Crab Fishermen's Association presented me with its "Black Hat" award for my success getting the Port of Chinook dredged. Last August, the Port of Chinook told me that unless the channel was dredged, the port would have to close, which would have devastated the local economy. As a member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water, I got the Army Corps of Engineers to dredge the channel and keep the port open.

Keeping the port open saved 40 jobs at the port and another 350 jobs that rely on the port at nearby stores, campgrounds, restaurants, and boat repair shops.

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