

PATTY MURRAY'S WASHINGTON VIEW

U.S. Senator Patty Murray's Weekly Report to the People of Washington – July 5, 2007

Immigration: I'm Committed to Working toward the Changes We Need

Last Thursday, comprehensive immigration legislation again failed to move forward in the Senate. While I felt the bill was far from perfect, I strongly believe that we needed to continue our work and voted to move forward to final consideration of the bill. I firmly believe that America needs comprehensive immigration reform that enhances our security, strengthens our economy, ensures a stable agriculture workforce, and reflects our core values.

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Veterans: Restoring VA Access to All Veterans

Last week, the Veterans' Affairs Committee passed my bill that would make 242,000 veterans, whose VA enrollment was cut off by the Bush Administration, eligible for care again. The bill would open the VA's door once again to those veterans referred to as Priority 8 veterans, who have non-service-connected disabilities and whose income is above a modest level that varies across the country. I believe that we must keep faith with the promise we make to all veterans when they sign up to serve – the promise that their sacrifices will mean guaranteed health care for life.

[Details](#)

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Hanford: \$1.96 Billion for Hanford Cleanup Priorities

Last week, I helped advance \$1.96 billion in cleanup funds for the Hanford nuclear site. I also fought to include an additional \$126 Million over the President's Budget proposal for critical projects to move forward on cleanup.

[Details](#)

["Senate budget boosts Hanford cleanup funding"](#) – Tri-City Herald

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Supreme Court Decision: A Setback for Diversity in our Schools

Last Thursday, the Supreme Court issued a decision on a school's ability to use race to promote diversity in schools. The Court's decision not to allow race to be considered will have lasting implications in Seattle and in school districts across the nation. I am disappointed and concerned by the Court's ruling. It's another step backward for underserved communities and makes it harder for schools to ensure quality educational opportunities for every student. Diversity in the classroom continues to be important, and now we'll all have to work harder to ensure that equity and diversity are not further undermined.

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Investing in Washington State's Needs

Working to Speed Up DNA Testing Times in Unsolved Rape Cases

Last week, I announced that I secured \$200,000 to help continue a Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) program that is reducing the wait time for DNA test results in unsolved, no suspect rape cases. Because of backlogs, it used to take months or even years to test DNA from unsolved rape cases. Under the WASPC program, DNA is being tested within days of the crime and results are being released within 30 days of testing.

[Details](#)

Fighting Meth in Our State

Last week, I also announced \$450,000 for the Washington State Methamphetamine Initiative. The Washington State Methamphetamine Initiative (WSMI) is used by law enforcement, treatment and prevention groups to fight methamphetamine throughout Washington state. The WSMI funds activities in every county in Washington state.

[Details](#)

Restoring Our Salmon Habitats

Last week, I worked to include \$90 million in funding for the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF) for salmon restoration projects throughout the Pacific Coast region in an annual Senate Spending bill. The funds will be used to support state, local, and tribal programs that help improve salmon habitats and restore the salmon population to healthy, harvestable levels. Historically, Washington state has received the largest portion of PCSRF funding given to any state in the Pacific Coast region.

[Details](#)