

PATTY MURRAY'S WASHINGTON VIEW

U.S. Senator Patty Murray's Weekly Report to the People of Washington - February 25, 2008

Veterans: President's Budget for Nation's Heroes is Unacceptable

Recently, Veterans Affairs Secretary James Peake came before the Senate Veterans Affairs' Committee to present the administration's budget for the upcoming year. I told Secretary Peake that I opposed several components of the budget including new fees and co-payments for veterans and a sharp cut in the VA construction budget that hurts our state. I also sought an update from the Secretary on how the VA is working to improve mental health care, particularly the tragic and growing problem of suicide among active duty military personnel and veterans. – [Details](#)

["Warning on cuts in veterans' health care"](#) – Seattle PI

["VA Chief Addresses Veteran Suicides"](#) – Associated Press

Northwest Washington Veterans – This week the VA announced that it would begin seeing patients at an interim clinic in Mount Vernon. While this temporary clinic is a move in the right direction, Congressman Rick Larrsen and I will continue to work to ensure that the VA fulfills its commitment to open a permanent facility in Northwest Washington. - [Details](#)

["VA starts treating veterans in Mount Vernon"](#) – Everett Herald

.....

MY WEEK AROUND OUR STATE

Walla Walla – On Tuesday, I was in Walla Walla with Veterans Affairs Secretary Peake. At my invitation, Secretary Peake came to tour the Walla Walla VA facility and speak with veterans, VA staff, and local residents. It was Secretary Peake's first trip to Walla Walla as Veterans Secretary. While at the Walla Walla VA, Secretary Peake announced that the VA will be investing \$6.7 million to build a new mental health facility there. While that is a step in the right direction, more needs to be done to ensure that the Walla Walla VA can provide the care the region's veterans deserve.

["VA announces money for mental health facility in Walla Walla"](#) – Associated Press

["VA to build \\$6.7 million unit for recovery in Walla Walla"](#) – Tri-City Herald

Thurston County – On Wednesday, I met with Thurston County leaders to discuss and tour damage from last December's devastating flooding. While touring the destruction I discussed the importance of moving forward with funding a levee-construction project designed to help protect against similar floods in the future.

["Murray brings prospect of federal aid during flood tour"](#) – The Olympian

["Thurston Residents Ask Assistance of Sen. Murray"](#) – Centralia Chronicle

Snohomish County – On Thursday, I joined with Snohomish County law enforcement and fire officials to discuss steep cuts in federal emergency responder grants the President has proposed. First responders rely on these grants to train and prepare for terrorist attacks and natural disasters. [Learn more](#) about the President's proposed cuts.

["Cuts may hinder county's security, officials say"](#) – Everett Herald

Seattle – On Thursday, I also held a roundtable discussion on finding solutions to the tragic problem of homelessness among veterans. Veterans, veteran advocates, and housing advocates joined me to talk about finding solutions to this epidemic.

["Sen. Murray to do more for vets on streets"](#) – Seattle Times

.....

Farm Bill: Working to Ensure Specialty Crops Get Support

Recently, I led a bipartisan, bicameral group of 90 Senators and Congressman in sending a letter to Congressional agriculture leaders urging the inclusion of strong specialty crop provisions in the final version of the Farm Bill. – [Details](#)

Sign Up for Patty Murray's Washington View: <http://murray.senate.gov/updates>