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Subject: The Conaway Chronicle
Date: Tuesday, April 15, 2008 4:47:21 PM

April 15, 2008 – Volume 4, Issue 10

Thank you for reading The Conaway Chronicle, a weekly review of my activities in Congress. This newsletter is to let you know what's going on in Washington and what important issues are being debated in Congress.

General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker in Washington

Last week, General David Petraeus and Ambassador to Iraq Ryan Crocker delivered their testimony on the status of the progress in Iraq to the House Armed Services Committee.

General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker made it clear that the progress that we have made in Iraq is significant, but if we do not proceed with care, the progress we have made could be reversed. The Iraqi government met 12 of the 18 benchmarks set for them, and have made significant progress on five others. It is predicted that one year from now, the U.S. will be giving Iraq half of the support that we currently are. It is important for us to allow the successes in Iraq to grow into a functional democracy and give our help when needed. We must acknowledge these successes, focus on future stability and democracy, and pass a clean troop funding bill and Terrorist Surveillance legislation in the House to keep our troops and Americans at home safe.

While Democrats in Washington continue their unconstructive criticism, consistently pushing for withdrawal from Iraq, our men and women in uniform continue to achieve great successes and diligently press forward with their mission. The fight for a democratic Iraq and against the violent Islamic jihadists is one that we must continue to pursue. The vast improvements that have been made in Iraq have been due to the dedication and work of our soldiers. The gift of freedom that our men and women fight for every day is priceless and does not go unnoticed.

Colombia Free Trade Agreement Needs to come to House Floor for Vote

Last Thursday, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi brought a vote to the floor to remove the ninety-day timetable for considering the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement, a move that indefinitely delays a final vote on the trade package.

I am very disappointed that Speaker Pelosi changed the rules in order to delay consideration of an agreement that is important not only to our economy, but to our national security as well. There has been increased instability in the region, but Colombia and President Uribe have been proven allies, and this agreement is essential in continuing that progress and cooperation. This agreement would give us a chance to vote for President Uribe and Democracy over Hugo Chavez and his Dictatorship. Passage of this agreement could represent an increase of food exports to Colombia by nearly $700 million a year, providing additional markets and economic boosts for agriculture producing states such as Texas.

A vote to delay consideration of this bill is a vote to kill this bill. The future of this trade

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agreement rests solely in the hands of Speaker Pelosi, and it is up to her as Speaker of the House to decide whether or not this important legislation is brought to the floor for a vote. I will work with my colleagues to urge her to do so.

Tax Day Cometh

Today, millions of American families will travel to the post office after rushing to meet the tax-filing deadline. But meanwhile in Washington, Congress is plotting its next move to dig even deeper into the pockets of hard-working Americans by imposing the largest tax increase in U.S. history.

Allowing this senseless tax increase ($683 billion over five years) will accomplish nothing but bloat the federal government and drain money from American taxpayers. As members of Congress, we must show the same responsibility and commitment as the Americans who file their taxes today and keep spending under control.

The Conaway Chronicle will be issued every week when Congress is in session. I hope that you will find it informative and will continue to stay informed with my recent legislative activities in Washington. In the meantime, if you have any questions, concerns or suggestions for future issues of the Conaway Chronicle, please visit the website at **www.house.gov/conaway** or don't hesitate to call me at (202) 225-3605. Check out my blog at **www.conawayblog.com**!

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