

# ***PATTY MURRAY'S WASHINGTON VIEW***

**U.S. Senator Patty Murray's Weekly Report to the People of Washington February 28, 2003**

## **EDUCATING THE CHILDREN OF OUR SERVICEMEN AND WOMEN**

This week, as thousands of members of our military continue to be called away from their homes for deployment, President Bush revealed his intention to cut funding to educate the children of these brave servicemen and women.

The President has proposed cutting \$175 million to Impact Aid, a program that provides federal resources to local communities where the federal government is a significant landowner – like military communities. Impact Aid helps make up lost property tax revenue that helps pay for schools and teachers.

On Tuesday, I sent a letter to the President urging him to restore this critical funding. I explained the devastating impact this cut would have on military communities in Washington state. This policy choice sends a terrible message to our men and women in uniform. As Commander-in-Chief, President Bush should be squarely supporting our servicemen and women, not cutting education funding for their children.

Last year, our state received about \$52 million in Impact Aid funding for the communities throughout the state, including Fort Lewis, McChord, Everett, Whidbey Island, Bangor, Fairchild and Bremerton. The President's 2004 budget would eliminate over \$6 million to help educate students in Washington state.

One of the most dramatic examples of Impact Aid's success is in Medical Lake, Washington, whose school district serves the children of military families stationed at Fairchild Air Force Base. For several years, the children of servicemen and women who attended Blair Elementary on Fairchild were forced to eat lunch in the hallways and endure leaking roofs. Congress intervened, along with the State of Washington, and funded construction of a new elementary school for these children.

Other military-impacted school districts in Washington state have similar, serious problems. They desperately need Impact Aid funding.

I am shocked that the President is considering cutting funds to educate the children of our military men and women at a time when we should be doing everything in our power to support them. Every parent wants the best for their children and our men and women in uniform are no different, and they deserve no less.

I will continue to work in the Senate to protect education funding for the children of our servicemen and women. I hope that the President will honor the men and women of our military and restore this cut to their children's education.

## **EXPANDING HOME MEDICINES TO MEDICARE PATIENTS**

Yesterday, I introduced a bill to require Medicare to cover the cost of some self-administered medical treatments for patients with chronic illnesses. Currently, Medicare will only pay for treatments that are given in a physician's office.

For patients living in rural areas or with disabilities, the current system presents an unnecessary burden, since there are a number of medications that can be taken at home to treat Rheumatoid Arthritis, Multiple Sclerosis, Hepatitis C, and Deep Vein Thrombosis.

This proposal will not only be more convenient for patients, but would save Medicare millions of dollars currently spent on doctor visits. Furthermore, many patients with private insurance, or on Medicaid, already have coverage for self-injectable treatments.

My bill is a bipartisan measure that has the support of organizations like the American Public Health Association, the Arthritis Foundation and the National Council on Aging. My colleague, Jennifer Dunn, introduced the same legislation in the House yesterday. The time has come to remove unfair and unnecessary burdens and give Medicare patients access to self-injectable treatments.

## **PROTECTING TITLE IX**

On Wednesday, I joined a bipartisan group of Senators in sending a letter to the President supporting existing Title IX policies. Since 1972, Title IX has opened the doors to athletics, education and success for millions of young women across America. The challenge for all of us, today, is to make sure those doors of opportunity stay open for our granddaughters and great-granddaughters. Our civil rights laws represent our attempt to build a nation of equal opportunity, finally guaranteeing that every child has the chance to reach her dreams.

I am very concerned that a report submitted this week by the Commission on Athletic Opportunity to the Secretary of Education will dismantle important Title IX protections. Our goal must be to build upon the progress of the last 30 years – not to take us backwards. That is why I have also sent a letter to Senator Gregg, Chair of the HELP Committee asking for a hearing on the process and recommendations of the Commission.

I remain committed to doing all that I can to protect Title IX and the future of every girl in Washington state and around the country who dreams of making the team, wearing a uniform, or winning an athletic scholarship. We need to protect existing Title IX policies and give every young girl in America the chance to experience the roar of a crowd – and not just cheer from the sidelines.

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