

PATTY MURRAY'S WASHINGTON VIEW

U.S. Senator Patty Murray's Weekly Report to the People of Washington – February 25, 2005

Keeping WA Moving

As the highest-ranking Democrat on the Senate Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee, I am in a position to help keep our state moving. I've made it one of my highest priorities to keep our ports safe and efficient, to fund highway improvements that reduce congestion, and to provide funding for other projects that help get Washingtonians where they're going quickly and safely. This week, I attended several transportation-related events all over our state at which I got to talk to residents and leaders about the transportation challenges they face.

Spokane Airport Tower Groundbreaking – On Monday, I attended the groundbreaking for the new Federal Aviation Administration Tower at Spokane International Airport. At the event, I delivered remarks and celebrated the opening of this state-of-the-art tower, for which I'm proud to have secured \$13 million.

Spokane Agriculture and Transportation Roundtable – Also on Monday, I hosted a roundtable meeting in Spokane with local transportation and agricultural representatives. At the meeting, we discussed the importance of better transportation infrastructure in helping farmers get their goods to market. The meeting was a great opportunity to hear about local concerns, and to let business leaders in Spokane know that I will continue to help them strengthen the local economy by funding better transportation infrastructure.

Port of Olympia Visit – On Wednesday, I received a walking tour of the Port of Olympia, during which I heard from port commissioners about their plans for expansion. I've been a staunch supporter of increased funding for our state's ports because I know they're one of the keys to our continued economic growth and global competitiveness.

Southwest Washington Transportation & Trade Roundtable – On Thursday, I hosted a roundtable with 40 port representatives, development and labor leaders, and transportation officials to discuss the challenges they face in getting their goods to market. It's critical to Southwest Washington's economy that we move goods to and through our ports as efficiently as possible so that we can keep our economy growing and keep creating good jobs. During the discussion, attendees emphasized the importance of good infrastructure. I let them know that I will continue to support the infrastructure improvements Southwest Washington needs, especially when it comes to rail, highways (particularly the Columbia Crossing), and channel deepening.

Read more about my work on transportation issues:
<http://murray.senate.gov/transportation>

Better Healthcare in Yakima Valley

As a member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, I've fought hard for quality healthcare for the people of Washington state. I know that, now more than ever, working families and seniors need access to quality care and affordable prescription drugs, and I'm continuing to fight to help meet that need. This week I attended two events in the Yakima Valley that showed me firsthand that we're really making progress on this critical front.

Memorial Hospital Visit – On Tuesday, I visited the Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital (YVMH) to view new technology that helps reduce medical errors and lower the cost of healthcare. Last year, I secured \$500,000 for this

project, which will allow YVMH to purchase and install a bar-coded patient identification system, wireless bedside medication administration system, and computer order entry. These improvements will contribute greatly to the reduction of serious medication errors. I am a firm believer in using technology to reduce medical errors and improve patient safety, and I was thrilled to get a demonstration and this great new technology in action.

Yakima VA Clinic Tour – I also received a tour of the Yakima VA's Community Health Clinic. When we send our brave men and women in uniform abroad to fight for our freedom, we make them a promise to take care of them both while they're deployed, and after they come back home. I know it's essential that we keep that promise, which is why I was so excited to visit the Yakima VA Clinic this week. Not only will the clinic make it easier for our veterans to get the care they need, but it will provide much-needed care to low-income Yakima Valley residents and seniors who would either have to go without care or would be forced to rely on the area's emergency rooms for primary care.

I know that thousands of veterans in the Yakima Valley and surrounding areas rely on the VA for care, and I want to make sure we take care of them in the way they deserve. I'm proud to have been a strong supporter of this health clinic, and I'm so excited that it will be available to veterans, seniors, and low-income residents of the Yakima Valley.

Read more about my work on healthcare:
<http://murray.senate.gov/healthcare>

Building Tomorrow's Workforce

I know it's absolutely crucial to the continued strength of our state and our nation that we give young people the education and training they need to take advantage of tomorrow's opportunities. From my Pathways for All Students to Succeed (PASS) Act, which gives kids the tools they need to graduate from high school and go on to good jobs or college, to my support of scholarships that help match students with prospective employers, I've been a strong advocate of building tomorrow's workforce today.

Tacoma Youth Workforce/Scholarship Launch – On Wednesday, in Tacoma, I was joined by Rep. Adam Smith at an event to kick off the In-Demand scholarship. This program will provide internships, job shadowing, mentoring and apprenticeship opportunities that will help students chart well-defined career paths. With these qualified and enthusiastic workers, Washington state will be able to grow and remain globally competitive.

Meeting with Clark County Leaders

Identify Clark County Government Roundtable – On Thursday, in Vancouver, I attended a roundtable hosted by the Clark County Government Relations Board. I had the opportunity to hear from 30 representatives of Vancouver, Camas, Washougal, Ridgefield, Clark County, Clark College, Clark Public Utilities, and the Clark County Chamber of Commerce, as well as Clark County transportation officials. They shared their concerns about the impact of the Bush Administration's new budget on Clark County.

Specifically, we talked about transportation – especially Columbia Crossing, Highway 14, and the I-5 SR 501 Interchange – community development block grants, economic development, and the impact of the No Child Left Behind law, all of which have been given low priority in the president's budget. Although the budget is extremely tight, I'm going to use my positions on both the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committees to fight hard for the federal funding needed to keep Clark County's communities strong.

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