

PATTY MURRAY'S WASHINGTON VIEW

U.S. Senator Patty Murray's Weekly Report to the People of Washington – January 12, 2007

IRAQ SURGE: Bush Ignores American People's Message

As I listened to the President on Wednesday night, I thought about the brave service members I met in Baghdad nearly two years ago and the 58,000 Washingtonians who have served in the region since the start of the war. With courage, they've done everything our country has asked of them. They deserve our respect and an approach that honors their tremendous sacrifices. The President's approach gives them neither.

The President has proposed an escalation of the fighting in Iraq. Despite the warnings of his top generals, and the message sent by the American people, the President has again decided to go it alone. This is the wrong approach.

Instead of escalating the war we should carefully redeploy our troops, require the Iraqis to take control of their own political and military stability, and work with neighbors in the region on a broader stabilization effort, as recommended by the Iraq Study Group.

We all want success in Iraq, and I will use the oversight process to get the facts, hear from the experts and help our country move forward.

WA MILITARY: Defense Subcommittee Appointment

New Position Will Help Washington's Military Communities and Families

On Wednesday I was officially named a member of the Defense Subcommittee of the U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations. This appointment will provide me with new opportunities to advocate for Washington state's military needs. The appointment will also allow me to have key oversight on defense strategy and spending.

The Defense Appropriations Subcommittee is a critically important panel that reviews budget requests, drafts legislation that allocates defense spending, and holds hearings on defense spending matters. Last year, the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee oversaw a budget of \$447.6 billion. Our state, home to many of the nation's largest and most vital military installations, draws substantial funding each year from the annual Defense Appropriations bill that this Subcommittee puts together.

On this Subcommittee I will be a voice for Washington's soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines. I will ask the questions they would ask, and I will fight for the resources and support they need to do their jobs safely and successfully.

At Fort Lewis, Naval Air Station - Whidbey, Fairchild Air Force Base, and in between, Washington state families and communities make tremendous sacrifices for America's security, and we owe them a great deal. I am very excited about the opportunities this new role presents for our state's military installations and the communities that depend on them.

A LOOK AHEAD

A preview of what some of my committee assignments will mean for Washingtonians

On Wednesday, I discussed what I would like to pursue in the new Congress as a member of the **U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP)**, including:

HEALTH CARE

FDA – I will work to pass legislation that helps restore confidence in the FDA.

Health Information Technology – I will build on our state's great work by pushing health IT to reduce medical errors, improve efficiency, and improve patient outcomes.

Preventive Health Care – I will work to reduce our health care costs through preventive healthcare services and health promotion.

EDUCATION

Head Start – I will work to ensure that Washington state families are given real early childhood education by working to address the funding challenges Head Start faces.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) – I will continue to fight to increase funding for NCLB and will focus on what we know works – reducing class size, improving teacher quality and measuring student achievement.

Student Aid/College Affordability – I will fight for Washington students by working to increase funding for Pell grants and other types of student aid.

PASS Act – I will work towards passing this Act, which will increase high school graduation rates and ensure that students can succeed after high school graduation.

LABOR

Workforce Investment Act (WIA) – When working to pass this legislation, I will fight for innovative training options for Washington state workers that will link them with the jobs employers need to fill in our state.

Workplace Safety – I will fight for Washington state workers by advocating for vigorous enforcement of existing health and safety workplace laws, while also prodding OSHA to issue rules that science has shown can protect more workers on the job.

Mine Safety – I will work to ensure that the sweeping mine safety legislation (which I helped pass last year) is implemented successfully to provide real piece of mind to the miners and their families.

On Tuesday, I discussed areas of concern I would like to address as a senior member of the **U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs**.

VETERANS

Oversight – I will work to provide stronger oversight of the Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA).

Real Plan - I will continue to request a real plan from the VA to meet the needs of our servicemen returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Real Budget – I will work to get the VA to present an honest budget to Congress that meets the needs of our veterans.

Mental Health/PTSD – I will fight for the funding necessary to meet the mental health needs veterans face.

Benefits Backlog – I will work to tackle the benefits backlog and expand benefit access.

Jobs and Homelessness - I will work to address homelessness and unemployment in the veteran's community.

View all my committee assignments:
<http://murray.senate.gov/committees.cfm>

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