

PATTY MURRAY'S WASHINGTON VIEW

U.S. Senator Patty Murray's Weekly Report to the People of Washington – May, 7th 2008

Wild Sky Wilderness Bill – On to the White House!

Last week, legislation creating the Wild Sky Wilderness area passed the House of Representatives - marking the first time that the bill has passed both chambers of Congress. This means that the Wild Sky legislation, which creates the first new wilderness land in our state in more than a decade, is now on to the White House for the President's signature. - [More](#)

["Congress finally OKs Wild Sky Wilderness"](#) – Seattle Times

["Wild Sky wilderness: Well worth the wait"](#) – Everett Herald

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Veterans: VA Must Be Honest About Mental Health Needs

Last week, I continued calls for transparency from the VA in the area of mental health. At a Capitol Hill press conference, I was joined by veterans, veterans' advocates and mental health leaders to discuss the need for the VA to step up mental health outreach and provide accurate data to Congress and the public. I recently called for the [resignation](#) of the top VA mental health official after an effort to cover-up statistics on veteran suicide was uncovered.

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Student Loans: Ensuring that Loans are Available During Tough Economic Times

Last Wednesday (4/30), I praised Senate passage of a bill that expands access to student loans at a time when many American families are struggling to afford college. The bill, the Ensuring Continued Access to Student Loans Act of 2008, aims to stabilize the student loan market so our students won't have to sacrifice their chance at higher education due to our declining economy. – [More](#)

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Medicare: Restoring Fairness for Washington State, Ensuring Access for Seniors

Last week, I joined with Congressman Adam Smith (WA-9) to introduce the Medifair Act, a bill that aims to fix national Medicare reimbursement disparities that hurt Washington state. The bill raises Washington state's Medicare reimbursement rates to the national average and ensures that all states receive at least the national average of per-patient spending. This will encourage doctors to provide Medicare in more areas and will improve access for our state's seniors. - [More](#)

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Poison Control: Continuing Federal Support for Poison Help Lifeline

Last week, I introduced bi-partisan legislation that will continue the federal government's support for the nation's poison control centers. The bill that I introduced will reauthorize the poison center national toll-free number, national media campaign, and state grant program. These programs provide parents and residents access to our nations life-saving poison control centers. – [More](#)

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Gas Prices: While we Struggle at the Pump, Oil Company Profits Soar

Last Wednesday (4/30), I delivered a speech on the Senate floor that highlighted the fact that middle class families are struggling with soaring gas prices at a time when oil company profits are hitting record highs. – [More](#)

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Worker Safety: Calling for Stiffer Fines in Workplace Death Cases

At a Senate Committee hearing last week, I heard from victim's family members and worker advocates about how Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) penalties are not stiff enough to deter worker safety violations. I am working to increase penalties by supporting the [Protect America's Workers Act](#). - [More](#)

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