



Ninth District News

Congressman Adam Smith

Op-Ed: Raising debt ceiling just the first step on road to fiscal health

Adam wrote the following op-ed for the July 29th edition of *The News Tribune*

America's economy is in tatters, and our unemployment numbers are way too high. Fixing these problems must be our top priority. At the same time, we must get our deficit under control. But in the short term, one deadline looms large. We need to raise the debt ceiling before Tuesday. This is non-negotiable. Currently, partisan and ideological extremists have hijacked this issue without thought to consequences.

We are legally obligated to pay bills in excess of the money we bring in, including Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, salaries for all federal employees including military, as well as contracts for goods and services purchased from businesses. Interest rates would skyrocket for all of us if we reneged on these legal obligations. And our already weakened economy would receive another devastating blow.

I do believe that getting our deficit under control is critical not just to our long-term fiscal health but to helping our economy right now. I support getting a firm plan in place that includes increasing revenue and cutting spending. While I don't support everything in either the Simpson-Bowles or the Gang of Six proposals, I believe their overall approach is correct. The uncertainty surrounding both our growing deficit and the inability of our government to lay out a clear plan for dealing with it are major factors in making businesses and investors reluctant to put money into our economy. We have had repeated threats of government shutdowns, countless short-term continuing resolution budgets, and endless numbers of programs and tax breaks set to expire with only guesses as to which ones will be extended. Invest-

tors' fear over this instability could be greatly reduced if we put in place a comprehensive long-term plan to reduce our deficit.

Revenue must be part of any comprehensive solution. Revenue has dropped from 21 percent of GDP in 2000 – the last year we ran a surplus – to less than 15 percent in 2009 and 2010. This changed in part because the wealthy and corporations were able to exploit an ever-expanding list of loopholes and write-offs, to the point where many major corporations pay no federal taxes at all. Balancing our budget on spending cuts alone would devastate every existing federal program. The deficit is now 40 percent of spending. This means a 40 percent cut in everything including Social Security and Medicare would be needed to get to a balanced budget without additional revenue. That is the wrong policy for our country.

We have no more time for dogma or righteousness holding up this vote. America is on the brink of default.

I believe a wide-ranging agreement is possible, and it was right to delay raising the debt ceiling in an effort to find a comprehensive solution for our fiscal and economic mess. But now, only days from the Tuesday deadline, our window of opportunity is closing. The debt ceiling must be raised, with or without a larger agreement. If we go forward without encouraging economic growth and tackling the national debt, however, our job will not be done. I will fight to encourage my colleagues to adopt a legislative package that restores fiscal responsibility and puts America's economy back on track as soon as possible.

National Guard opens new Cyber Security center on Joint Base Lewis-McChord

A Joint Base Lewis-McChord construction project years in the making became a reality on June 3rd, when the Washington National Guard officially opened the new home of the 262nd Network Warfare Squadron (NWS). The 262nd NWS is charged with safeguarding Air Force computer systems and protecting against cyber attacks against our digital information networks.

Adam requested the funding for the \$5.6 million, 23,500 square foot facility as part of the FY 2008 National Defense Authorization bill. "I am proud to have these cyber warriors—most of whom have civilian day jobs at local tech companies—here in the Puget Sound area. They need this new facility as the squadron takes on a more prominent role in America's cyber security efforts," Adam said.

The work of the 262nd NWS involves a range of cyber-



Ribbon cutting for the new 262nd NWS building

security missions, including replicating the cyber attack capabilities of potential adversaries to the U.S.

The new site includes classrooms and multiple highly secured computer networks. The 262nd NWS' previous facility was a Korean War-era building without adequate space or security protections.

Smith introduces MediFAIR Act of 2011, helping Washington patients, doctors

On June 15th, Adam introduced legislation to address national Medicare reimbursement inequities that unfairly shortchange the Pacific Northwest.

Washington State's Medicare reimbursement rates are well below average for other regions of the country. In 2007, the average Medicare patient in Tacoma received \$7,797 for care, well under the national average of \$8,682. The same year, Medicare paid \$10,430 for patients in Dallas, Texas; \$11,303 in Los Angeles, California, and \$17,274 in Miami, Florida.

The MediFair Act of 2011 would level the playing field for patients by increasing Medicare reimbursement rates in regions with payments lower than the national average and decreasing rates in inefficient regions with payments higher than the national average.

"It is unacceptable that seniors in the Pacific Northwest have some of the lowest Medicare reimbursement rates in the country. Access to health care should not depend on where patients happen to live. The MediFair Act would ensure that Washington State's seniors have just as much access to doctors as other seniors around the country and would stop punishing the state's health care system for providing efficient, quality care.

"The current federal program punishes Washington State's lack of waste and low utilization of health care through very low Medicare reimbursement rates for our health care providers, which hurts patients. We should reward states that practice good governance, not punish them, and the MediFair Act is a step in that direction," Adam said.



Giffords and Adam on a HASC visit to Afghanistan

Giffords' Energy Security Act Introduced by Ranking Member Adam Smith

The United States military relies heavily on fossil fuels to operate and execute its missions, creating a vulnerability that our enemies are keenly aware of. To address this significant national security issue, on behalf of his friend, Representative Gabrielle Giffords, Adam introduced the Department of Defense Energy Security Act of 2011 (DODESA). The bill is designed to move the Department of Defense forward on energy security by

reducing its dependence on fossil fuels.

"Representative Giffords has been a leader on this issue and it is an honor to introduce this important piece of legislation on her behalf," said Adam. "Since joining the House Armed Services Committee, Representative Giffords has understood that our military's overreliance on fossil fuels represents one of our great vulnerabilities and she has worked tirelessly to address this shortfall. I applaud her for her hard work and dedication to this issue."

"Our enemies are critically aware of our reliance on oil, and they are using it to their advantage," the congresswoman said at a press conference last year to introduce a similar piece of legislation. "Instead of fighting the enemy, thousands of service members are dedicated to securing supply lines so that fuel can reach forward operating bases and far-reaching outposts."

In order to prevent any degradation in our military's ability to defeat our enemies, DODESA includes exemptions for fuel use in major combat operations and permits the Secretary of Defense to waive any requirements that hamper their ability to accomplish their mission or maintain our national security.

Introducing "Grants on the Go" Workshops

This summer, Adam's office is introducing "Grants on the Go," a traveling 30-60 minute workshop with Wendy Sonnemann, Adam's Grants and Procurement Coordinator. The program, available to small groups throughout the district, gives organizations the opportunity to meet with Wendy to learn more about identifying and applying for government funding opportunities and how Adam and his office can help.

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