



Newsletter

Winter 2007/ Spring 2008
Page 1

A Message from Your Representative

CONGRESSWOMAN DIANE E. WATSON



Dear Friend,

I am pleased to report to you on my activities on your behalf in the 33rd Congressional District and Washington, D.C.

Today, we are witnessing significant changes in our economy that are touching every aspect of our daily lives. As your representative, I am committed to utilizing federal resources and programs to improve your quality of life and ensure that the residents of Los Angeles, Hollywood and Culver City have a significant voice in Congress.

In the 110th Congress, the House of Representatives once again addressed the following very significant issues -- the economic stimulus plan, the war in Iraq, education, immigration, energy, the environment, and health. We have worked hard to stay on top of the issues and to represent the needs and concerns of all of our constituents.

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter and please feel free to share it with others who may have an interest.

Diane E. Watson
Member of Congress

MORE NEWS FROM DIANE E. WATSON

Rep. Watson Speaks on Intellectual Property Rights at Hollywood/US Chamber of Commerce

As a representative of the Hollywood area of Los Angeles, I am very concerned about the importance of respecting the creative value of others' work and methods to develop strong, effective intellectual property laws. I spoke on this issue at a press conference sponsored by the Hollywood and U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

It is devastating to know that counterfeiting and other intellectual property crimes cost American businesses an estimated \$200 to \$250 billion dollars per year. These crimes have contributed to the loss of more than 750,000 jobs and depleted reserves of billions of dollars in unpaid taxes on all levels - local, state, and federal.

Are You Ready for the Digital Television Transition (DTV)?

Watson Hosts DTV Forum in the 33rd

The Digital Television Transition (DTV) will occur in less than one year on February 17, 2009. Are you ready?

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Rep. Watson speaks to constituents about the DTV transition

New Directions Congress

Many Americans believe our nation is headed in the wrong direction and that they are paying the price for bad choices: record costs for energy, education, and health care; jobs shipped overseas; and budgets balanced on the backs of our children. For millions, the middle-class dream has been replaced by the middle-class squeeze. Too many Americans cannot meet their basic needs and are sinking deeper into debt. Others have seen their dream of home ownership dashed or threatened by rising interest rates and deflation in the nation's housing market.

That's why I strongly support the congressional leadership's efforts to promote a New Direction for America. The New Direction for America advances the right priorities—to make

(continued)



Congresswoman Diane E. Watson

Winter 2007/ Spring 2008
Page 2

our nation safer and our economy fairer; to make health care and college more affordable; to energize America with energy independence; and to guarantee a dignified retirement for all Americans.

The 110th Congress has already passed legislation that reflects its commitment to a New Direction, including ethics reform, cutting interest rates on student loans, and enacting energy legislation that ends subsidies for oil companies earning record profits.

The New Direction for America emphasizes common sense priorities and principles – economic and energy security, affordable health care and education, and jobs with affordable wages and benefits – that the vast majority of Americans hold in the highest regard.

I will continue to fight for a New Direction that reflects the aspirations, hopes, and dreams of the American people.

Veteran's Day

Rep. Watson honored all veterans and fallen heroes of the 33rd Congressional District at an event held at Holman United Methodist Church on Veteran's Day. She spoke about how government can prevent veterans from being left behind and spoke of the transition from the battlefield to the work world. In her remarks, she announced that the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate recently approved the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Spending Bill. Under this bill an additional \$600 million dollars will be allotted for post traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury.

A representative from the Vietnam Veterans of America described the mental health conditions that veterans suffer after seeing the aftermath of bombs, destruction, and death unfold before their eyes.

Watson introduced (H.R.1853), the Jose Medina Veterans Affairs Act, to provide training for veteran affairs police officers who work with mentally ill veterans. This bill was introduced to make certain that every veteran is treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.



Rep. Watson speaks to veterans about the transition from the battlefield to the work world.

Congress has mandated that on February 17, 2009, all local television stations will stop broadcasting in the traditional analog format and switch to all-digital transmissions.

You may lose your television service if you are not prepared for this change.



There are still some televisions in use that receive signals over the air using "rabbit ears" and are not connected to cable or satellite service. These sets will need a digital-to-analog converter box after the digital television transition. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) is making two \$40 coupons available to every household to help defray the cost of converter boxes. On January 1, 2008, households will be able to request up to two coupons valued at \$40 each to go towards the purchase of a single converter box. Coupons will be mailed via the U.S. Postal Service, and consumers will have approximately three months to redeem them. Please send a request to: DTV Converter Box Coupon Program, P.O. Box 2000, Portland, OR 97208. For additional information, please go to www.dtv2009.gov or call the Consumer Information Hotline at 1-888-388-2009.

The first successful DTV Forum was held in the district in February. The district office is organizing three additional forums in the coming months. Please contact the district office for dates, times and locations.



State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)

I voted to override the President's veto of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) bill. The bill ensures that 6 million children who currently participate in SCHIP continue to receive health care coverage. The legislation would also extend coverage to an additional 4 million uninsured children and invest \$35 billion over five years to increase health care coverage for low-income, uninsured children.

Although the President signed an extension of the SCHIP bill in December of 2007, I do not believe that the funding is at an adequate level to meet the needs of our nation's children. A slowing economy has already led to an increased demand nationwide for SCHIP services. Children will be denied access to such a vital service as health insurance.



We should not play with the lives of our children. Access to quality healthcare for our nation's children should be a top priority as we lay the groundwork for these children to become the healthy adults of tomorrow.

Johnny Grant Film Diplomacy Act

Hollywood lost a great spokesperson upon the death of Johnny Grant, the honorary Mayor of Hollywood. The Walk of Fame, the USO and other activities that he spearheaded will not be the same without him. He touched many lives and inspired many nationally and worldwide.



I knew Johnny Grant as a great patriot and legendary friend of American entertainment. Throughout his life, Johnny was an ardent proponent of the power of American motion pictures that convey the universal values of freedom and opportunity around the world.

Last year, I introduced H.R. 2553, now the (Johnny Grant) "Public Diplomacy Act of 2007." This bill is designed to provide our diplomats abroad with additional tools to show the world the best of America and to improve our nation's international reputation by placing our best movies in embassies and information centers throughout the world. In honor of Johnny Grant, the bill's has been renamed the "Johnny Grant Film Diplomacy Act."

SPECIAL REPORT:

Watson Introduces Legislation in Support of Cherokee Freedmen

Imagine yourself as an African American and resident of the State of Alabama in 1964, the year that President Lyndon Johnson signed into law the historic Civil Rights Act. And again imagine in 1964 that Alabama Governor George Wallace, in an act of defiance that not even he considered, introduced legislation to expel all African Americans from Alabama.

Now fast forward to the year 2007, over four decades later, when the citizens of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma voted last March to expel their black citizens in a manner that equaled if not surpassed the most vitriolic attacks against African Americans in the once segregated South.

Many Americans do not realize that some Native American tribes owned slaves of African descent. As an independently recognized nation in the 19th Century, the Cherokee Nation embraced and promoted African slavery, a position it maintained after removal to Indian Territory (present day Oklahoma) in the 1830s.

During the Civil War, the Cherokee Nation fought on the side of the Confederacy in order to preserve its southern slaveholding tradition of trafficking in the ownership and sale of black slaves. In fact, Stand Waite, the last Confederate General to surrender to the Union Army, was Cherokee.



Diane E. Watson Introduces HIV/AIDS After Incarceration Legislation

I introduced legislation to safeguard the health and lives of newly released prisoners and their loved ones. The After Care Act of 2007 is an after incarceration legislation that would require HIV testing of Federal prisoners about to be released from the prison system.

The legislation provides for testing of inmates upon release with counseling. Newly released prisoners found to be HIV positive would receive comprehensive medical treatment and confidential counseling on managing their medical condition and preventing HIV transmission to other persons. They would also be required to notify any prospective sexual partner of their HIV/AIDS status. The legislation would also insure the establishment of a program for medical treatment of prisoners for two years after their release by the Bureau of Prisons.

It is my hope that this legislation will reduce the inevitable transmission of the HIV/AIDS virus to others by prisoners released into their respective communities.

Watson Announces Federal Funding for 33rd District

I am pleased to announce that the 33rd Congressional District has been awarded over \$6 million in federal appropriations.

The funds will be used for new transportation projects, library renovation, housing, education, and job training.

The funded projects include:

Culver City – Interagency Communications Interoperability Systems (\$235,000), In-Car Vehicle Video Recording (\$84,000), and Venice/Robertson Multi-Modal Station (\$500,000); Save Our Future/Mothers on the March – Expansion of After-School Programs (\$338,400); City of Los Angeles – Adams-La Brea Retail Project (\$282,000); Ballona Creek Environmental Restoration (\$344,000); West Los Angeles College – On Location Entertainment Industry Craft and Technician Training (\$526,000); Municipal Transit Operators Coalition (MTOC) – Bus Purchase/Facilities Upgrades (\$1,100,000); University of Southern California – Methanol Studies (\$2,000,000); Friends of CASA – Court Appointed Special Advocates, LA County (\$235,000); Metro Homeless Youth Services of LA –To Expand Services for Homeless Youth with Drug Problems (\$292,000).



The Cherokee Nation emancipated all its slaves in 1863. In 1866, the Cherokee Nation signed a new treaty with the United States Government that formally ended the practice of slavery and made the former slaves citizens of the Cherokee Nation. The Treaty of 1866 resulted in an amendment to the Cherokee constitution that same year, which read in part: "All native born Cherokees, all Indians, and whites legally members of the nation by adoption, and all freedmen (the term used for freed slaves of African descendants of the Cherokee Nation) shall be taken and deemed to be citizens of the Cherokee Nation."

Immediately following the signing of the Treaty of 1866, Cherokee officials called for a special election to amend the Cherokee Constitution to adopt the freed slaves and other mixed Cherokee and black Indians as citizens of the Cherokee Nation.

Toward the end of the 19th Century, a distinction, a product of the new Jim Crow South and later codified in practice by the U.S. Government, had emerged between black freedmen Cherokees and those who were categorized as Cherokee by blood. The distinction is used today by the current Cherokee leadership that claims it is primarily concerned about preserving the Cherokee Nation's heritage for those who can prove that they have Cherokee blood lineage.

But such claims, as Professor Robert Warrior of the University of Oklahoma elegantly makes the case, "fail to rise to the level of those earlier Cherokees who understood that the tragic absurdity of reconciling a nation to its history of slavery requires wisdom

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Congressional Arts Competition Winner

Congresswoman Watson congratulates Jon Rosario whose painting is the winning entry in this year's 33rd Congressional District Arts Competition.



Congresswoman Watson congratulates Jon Rosario for winning this year's competition.

The Congressional Arts Competition is sponsored by the U.S. House of Representatives. Art work from each participating congressional district is displayed in the Capitol for one year.

Economic Stimulus Package and How It Will Impact the 33rd

On February 13, 2008, President Bush signed into law a \$152 billion economic stimulus plan approved by Congress the week before. The plan is intended to provide a quick infusion of cash into the economy through rebates to taxpayers and new tax breaks for businesses. It is estimated that about \$210 million will be received by taxpayers who reside in the 33rd Congressional District. Individual taxpayers are eligible for the tax rebate or credit if they have qualifying income over \$3,000. Qualifying income includes earned income, social security benefits, and certain veteran's benefits.

Qualifying residents of the 33rd will receive rebate checks of up to \$600 per individual and \$1200 per married couple, plus an additional \$300 per child, based upon income and filing status. The economic stimulus legislation will put money back into the hands of low-income and middle-income Americans—those who need it most. Additionally, it will help jumpstart our slowing economy.

American Gold Star Mothers



I was pleased to participate in the rededication of the American Gold Star Mothers' Rose Garden. The organization was named after the Gold Star that families hung in their windows in honor of deceased veterans and that the original copy of the Federal Charter granted to the American Gold Star Mothers, Inc. was placed in the Archives of Congress.

The American Gold Star Mothers have suffered the supreme sacrifice of motherhood in the loss of their sons and daughters during many World Wars. In response, these noble women decided to start an organization for the purpose of preserving the memory of their loved ones and to assist the spouses and dependents to "wade through the red tape" of filing benefit claims to the Veteran's Administration.

I commended their dedication and exemplary service by presenting the Congressional Certificate of Recognition in honor of the American Gold Star Mothers' tremendous courage, dedication and achievements.

Winter 2007/ Spring 2008
Page 5

and compassion, not insulting and ridiculous appeals to faulty membership requirements and the poses of victim-hood."

Today, the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma receives roughly \$300 million a year in federal taxpayer dollars. The Cherokee Nation is also the beneficiary of a federal gaming franchise that is estimated to yield it another \$300 million yearly. This is not an insignificant amount of money.

If the Cherokee Nation is allowed to pursue its current policy of expelling black descendants of the Cherokee Nation, black descendants obviously will not be able to receive federal assistance from the Cherokee Nation in the form of health, education, and housing assistance.

I do not believe that your or my taxpayer dollars should go to any group that practices discrimination. First and foremost, it is against the law. That is why I have introduced legislation, H.R. 2824, that cuts off all U.S. government relations with the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma until it agrees to accept the black descendants of the Cherokees as full participating citizens of the Cherokee Nation.

I respect the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma as a sovereign entity. But no sovereign nation, particularly one within the confines of the United States, should be given a free pass to exercise its sovereign rights to expel its citizens on the basis of ethnicity, class, or race. And when a nation violates its treaty obligations with the United States, Congress is obliged to take action.



Congresswoman Diane E. Watson

Diane E. Watson Hosts Healthcare Disparities Roundtable

I hosted a Healthcare Disparities Roundtable in the 33rd District. The roundtable brought together healthcare researchers, professionals, and advocates from the 33rd. Recommendations included short and long term strategies as well as interventions for improved health care access, awareness and outcomes in under-served communities.

Some of their recommendations included calls for more funded genetic research with increased minority participation; the adjustment of federal programs to promote preventative health care; better inducements for health care professionals to work in minority communities; culturally-appropriate education and services that support families' efforts to stay healthy; and the expansion of SCHIP to provide health coverage for all children.



Rep. Watson and members of the Health Disparities Roundtable

I am pleased that their recommendations were disseminated to policymakers for use in formulating congressional policy. As a result of their input, I co-sponsored the Health Equity and Accountability Act (H.R. 3014).

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Winter 2007/ Spring 2008
Page 6

War in Iraq

The war in Iraq has lasted for five years, making it the third longest war in American history, after the Revolutionary War and the Vietnam War. Our generals and military leaders are warning that our military is stretched and strained and our nation is facing a military readiness crisis the U.S. has not experienced since the end of the Vietnam War.

According to Army Chief of Staff General George Casey, "...the cumulative effects of the last six-plus years at war have left our Army out of balance, consumed by the current fight and unable to do the things we know we need to do to properly sustain our all-volunteer force and restore our flexibility for an uncertain future."

The war in Iraq is now costing Americans \$123.6 billion annually. This breaks down to \$10.3 billion a month, \$2.4 billion a week, and \$338,630,137 a day.

By any standard, this is not an insignificant amount of money that I believe could be better put to use for programs like health, education, and repairing our nation's aging infrastructure.

I did not support the initial deployment of U.S. troops to Iraq in 2003, and I continue to oppose their current deployment. I believe we must redeploy our troops and that it is past time for the Government of Iraq to stand up and meet the President's benchmarks for progress.

I will continue to oppose all new funding for the war in Iraq and work with my colleagues in and out of Congress who are committed to refocusing the fight on terrorism on Afghanistan and al Qaeda.