

September 2007

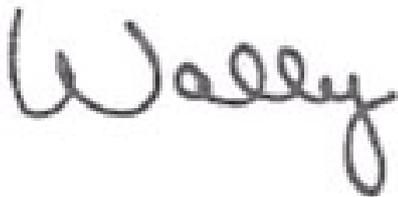
Dear Friends:

I want to thank you again for signing up to receive my periodic "e-updates." Over the past several months, I hope you have found that the e-updates are providing an informative review of actions in Congress and activities in Northern California. I'm pleased that this format has allowed Northern Californians to easily share their feedback on issues directly with me.

On August 4, Congress adjourned for the annual August District Work Period, which lasted through the Labor Day weekend. Prior to adjourning, Congress considered a critical intelligence bill and energy legislation, which are discussed below. I also review several events throughout the Second Congressional District that took place in August.

As always, if you would like to share your thoughts about these or other federal issues important to you, feel free to [contact me](#) .

Sincerely,



Legislative Update

Critical Intelligence Bill Passed

On August 4, Congress passed the [Protect America Act](#) , which provides our nation's

intelligence community with the tools they need to monitor the international communications of suspected terrorists. The measure passed after Director of National Intelligence J. Michael McConnell urged Congress to modernize the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 (FISA). This law sets forth the process for collecting intelligence in foreign countries. But it is nearly 30 years old and does not take into account modern technologies, such as the Internet, in which communications between foreigners may be routed through switches in the United States. The Protect America Act provides a six-month modernization of FISA.

As Congress returns to Washington, I believe one of its top priorities should be to pass a permanent FISA modernization bill that reflects the dynamics of 21st century communications technology and equips our intelligence community with the ability to monitor suspected jihadists abroad. The recent arrests of suspected jihadists in Germany--who were plotting attacks against U.S. interests--further demonstrated that our nation remain at great risk. Reports indicate that intercepted communications played a critical role in catching the suspects in Germany. The lesson from this looming tragedy was simple--good intelligence is essential to preventing terrorist attacks. To that end, modernizing FISA will help ensure our nation can continue to discover terrorist plots before it is too late. [Read more](#)

Missed Chance on Energy Reform

On August 4, the House passed an energy package, [H.R. 3221](#) and [H.R. 2776](#), that unfortunately does not take the steps necessary to reduce America's dependence on foreign energy or lower the record gas prices in Northern California. The bill would establish new federal mandates and impose \$15 billion in new taxes on U.S. energy producers, steps that would lead only to higher energy prices for U.S. consumers. Instead, I believe Congress should build on energy reforms passed in 2005 and 2006 that provided for environmentally-safe exploration of more domestic resources and fostered the development of renewable energies.

We are now importing over 60 percent of our oil resources, and much of it comes from volatile regions. This represents a threat to our national security and economic well-being, which is why I believe our nation must develop our own energy resources to become more energy self-sufficient.

[Read more](#)

Protecting Private Property Rights

I recently cosponsored [H.R. 3053](#) , the Private Property Rights Protection Act of 2007. This legislation, which passed the House in 2005 but was never considered by the Senate, responds to the Supreme Court's outrageous ruling in the case of *Kelo v. City of New London*.

In that case, the Supreme Court ruled that local governments could use the power of eminent domain to seize private property and give it to another private party for the purpose of "economic development." This is a blatant violation of the private property rights guaranteed to Americans by our Constitution. H.R. 3053 would curb these abuses by denying federal funding to local governments that misuse eminent domain for economic development.

[Share your thoughts](#)

Free Trade Agreements Pending

Free trade is so important to our agriculture rich Northern California simply for the fact that we grow more than we can possibly consume as a nation. The U.S. has recently signed a number of key market-opening agreements with three major trading partners in our hemisphere--Panama, Peru and Colombia.

These agreements will open new markets in these countries for U.S. farmers, manufacturers and service providers, and will level the playing field for U.S. producers. All three countries currently benefit from one-way trade preferences, meaning we allow their goods into the U.S. free of charge, while our farm products and manufactured goods often face high tariffs and other trade barriers. The trade agreements will reverse this trend, and allow equal access for our exports. The [Peru Trade Promotion Agreement](#) would allow 80 percent of U.S. exports to enter duty-free immediately, including more than two-thirds of agriculture exports like almonds, peaches, wheat and apples. The [Panama agreement](#) would allow 88 percent of U.S. exports to enter duty free.

As the third largest economy in South America, the [Colombia agreement](#) is especially attractive. Like Peru, the Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement will immediately open the door to 80 percent of U.S. exports. Further, the U.S. International Trade Commission estimates that our exports to Colombia will increase by more than \$1 billion, and the agreement will add \$2.5

billion per year to our economy. Colombia is also a critical security partner in Latin America. Despite efforts by Fidel Castro in Cuba and Marxist Hugo Chavez in Venezuela to intervene in Colombia's elections, the Colombian people have elected a pro-U.S., pro-free market government that is committed to bringing safety and security to the country and defeating narco-terrorists.

[e your thoughts](#)

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District News

Recap of Anti-Scam Seminars

In early August I hosted a series of "Senior Anti-Scam Seminars - Don't Be a Victim" across our Northern California congressional district. The goal of these events was to educate senior citizens and others about the dangers of financial scams. I invited local law enforcement and other counter-fraud experts to join me in outlining steps individuals can take to help protect themselves from becoming the next victim of fraud. The common message was, "If it seems too good to be true, it probably is." For more information about how you and your family can protect yourself from being "scammed," [click here](#) .

Patriot Guard Riders Honored



[Read my Summer Newsletter](#)