

Recent Past

"Tax Day" Shows Mounting Tax Burden

For Americans across our nation, April 15 served as another reminder that government taxes too much and that our tax code is far too complicated. On this dreaded day, I supported an effort on the House floor to block a looming \$683 billion tax increase envisioned by the majority party, including an increase in the marriage penalty and a \$500 per child tax increase. Unfortunately, this effort was defeated. I also endorsed a proposed Constitutional amendment designed to eliminate wasteful Washington spending. ([Read more](#)) As we face an uncertain economic period, now is certainly not the time to raise taxes and ignore skyrocketing government spending. While we must provide for our troops and national defense, achieving a balanced budget will require sacrifices in many non-security programs. I believe Congress must make tough decisions today to establish the foundation for a strong and vibrant economy in the future.

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Majority Rejects Fair Trade with Key Ally

As I [reported](#) in December, the U.S. has negotiated a fair trade agreement with Colombia that would level the playing field for U.S. workers, growers, and manufacturers. Colombian products enter our nation mostly duty-free, but U.S. producers currently face stiff tariffs when exporting goods and services to Colombia. Unfortunately, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi recently used an unprecedented procedural tactic to effectively defeat the Colombia agreement. (

[Read my post on The Hill newspaper's Congress Blog](#)

) Putting this agreement on ice was terrible news for U.S. workers and our economy. It was also a slap in the face of a key Latin American ally that has undergone a remarkable transformation by embracing democracy and open markets. I will continue to advocate strongly for this win-win fair trade agreement.

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General Petraeus Discusses Iraq Turnaround

General David Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker recently [testified before Congress](#) about the situation in Iraq. Both leaders spoke of clear progress in securing cities once considered strongholds of al Qaeda and other extremists, building up effective Iraqi Security Forces, and fostering peace and reconciliation among the Iraqi people. Iraq is experiencing the combination of security improvements and political progress that is essential to achieving long-term stability. While significant challenges remain in Iraq, I am encouraged by the transformation we've seen in recent months. I believe Congress should support the counter-insurgency plan that is proving successful, and continue to fully provide our troops with the resources and equipment they need to successfully prosecute their missions.

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Right Now

Congress Shouldn't Worsen Housing Crisis

Like many Northern Californians, I am concerned about the declining housing market and the effect high foreclosure rates are having on the economy and local communities. However, I believe that the government intervention envisioned in the major legislative proposals currently being considered by Congress could end up doing more harm than good for most taxpayers. For instance, legislation to allow the federal government to insure certain at-risk mortgages could unfairly transfer the risk of those loans to other taxpayers-many of whom are paying their own mortgages or trying to save for a home. Such proposals could encourage even greater risk-taking in the future, which could lead to other problems down the road. There are however, many lender-led initiatives -- some of which were spurred by the federal government -- to help individual homeowners who are struggling to make payments. For guidance on how to manage rising mortgage payments, please click [HERE](#) . [Share your thoughts](#)

Law of Sea Treaty Harmful to U.S.

I recently joined several representatives in [urging](#) U.S. senators to reject the international agreement commonly referred to as the Law of the Sea Treaty (LOST). This treaty would define the rights and responsibilities of nations for their use of the world's oceans, and create guidelines for business and military activities in the seas. Although LOST has some advantages, I believe it would unacceptably erode U.S. national sovereignty and threaten our national interest. It would grant an international organization the power to tax and administer fees. Further, it could undermine our nation's military and intelligence activities because U.S. submarines and other underwater vehicles conducting sensitive operations would be required to "show their flag." The agreement may also place strict environmental restrictions on ongoing military activities. In total, therefore, I believe the agreement is not in our national interests, and believe the Senate should reject it.

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Coming Up Soon

Strong Support for New GI Education Bill

I recently joined 170 of my colleagues in introducing bipartisan legislation to improve educational benefits for veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. [H.R. 5740](#), the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act, is modeled after the World War II "G.I. Bill," and would guarantee that veterans who have served on active duty since September 11, 2001 - including members of the National Guard and Reserves - receive assistance covering the full cost of in-state tuition at any public university in their state, along with a monthly housing stipend. Educational assistance is the best way to ensure that veterans make a successful transition to civilian life, and it may also help to reduce the incidence of post traumatic stress disorder. I believe passing a new, comprehensive G.I. bill is one way America can convey its gratitude to the men and women who have put their lives on the line in defense of our nation.

Boy Scouts 100th Anniversary Approaching

The Boy Scouts of America will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2010. As an Eagle Scout and longtime Scoutmaster, I believe Boy Scouts is a tremendous asset in our communities and can help build character and integrity in young men across our nation. I have joined many others in Congress to [urge](#) the Postmaster General to create a special stamp in honor of the Boy Scouts' upcoming anniversary. I also support [legislation](#) to create a commemorative coin to mark the occasion. I believe creating a stamp and coin to commemorate the Boy Scouts 100th anniversary would be well received by millions of current and former Scouts, and would help raise awareness about the benefits of this important program.

District News

Visit with Shasta Co. Farm Bureau



I recently attended the annual meeting of the Shasta County Farm Bureau. As a third generation rancher, I'm well aware of the importance of agriculture in Northern California. Since Americans can't eat all of the prunes, rice, nuts, beef, and other products grown in the North State, I believe it's critical that we work to open markets abroad to U.S. agriculture. To that end, in addition to the Colombia agreement, the U.S. has signed a fair trade agreement with South Korea. Earlier this month, South Korea removed its ban on U.S. beef, which was a very positive development and laid the groundwork for Congress to consider this agreement. I am concerned that the agreement would not open South Korea's market to U.S. rice. I support the overall agreement, however, because there are many other Northern California commodities that stand to benefit. I will continue working actively in my capacity as the lead Republican on the House Ways and Means Trade Subcommittee to get market access for rice through other channels. [Share your thoughts](#)

