

Recent Past

New Law Funds Troops, Expands GI Benefits

With my support, Congress has approved a bill that provides [additional funding for our troops](#) serving in Iraq and Afghanistan and expands educational benefits to U.S. military personnel who have served since the September 11 terrorist attacks. Our troops are performing with unmatched honor and skill and this measure ensures that our fighting forces will have the resources they need to successfully continue their mission. The bill also demonstrates much deserved gratitude to our men and women in uniform by covering the full cost of in-state tuition at any public university in their state, along with a monthly housing stipend, and authorizes the U.S. government to provide matching funds to private colleges that voluntarily contribute additional assistance for veterans. The President has signed this bill into law.

[Share your thoughts](#)

Court Recognizes Individual Gun Rights

I am happy to inform you that the United States Supreme Court [rejected the District of Columbia's ban on handguns](#) and declared that the Second Amendment of the Constitution protects an individual right to own a firearm. For far too long, the deeply restrictive DC gun ban violated this fundamental right by keeping virtually any firearm out of the hands of law-abiding citizens. With this 5-4 decision, the Court correctly concluded that the architects of our Constitution designed the Second Amendment to guarantee that all Americans have the right to own a gun for protection and for hunting and other recreational activities. This defining ruling clearly upholds our founding father's intent and is a victory for individual liberty across America.

[Share your thoughts](#)

Right Now

Federal Disaster Declared for Wildfires



The lightning-caused fires that erupted in California in June constituted a disaster that wreaked havoc across the North State. I was able to witness firsthand the efforts of our brave firefighters and communities. I toured the Humboldt fire in Butte County on June 15th, the Butte Lightning Complex on June 28th, and the Shasta-Trinity fires on July 2nd. At one point there were more than 1,400 fires blazing in our State, with a majority of those fires burning in Northern California. [I contacted President Bush](#), along with 34 members of the California Congressional Delegation, in strong support of Governor Schwarzenegger's request for a federal disaster declaration, and I am pleased to report that request was swiftly granted. This emergency declaration opened up essential federal resources needed to save the homes, property and potentially the lives of our citizens. Enormous progress is being made by the unprecedented number of firefighters battling these blazes. The tinder dry conditions in our National Forests underscore the urgent need to update the overly restrictive federal laws that have prevented strategic thinning of terribly overstocked stands of trees. I will continue to fight for common sense reforms of these laws. [Share your thoughts](#)

Decreasing Our Reliance on Foreign Oil

I have been supporting [efforts in the House](#) to ease our dependence on foreign oil by increasing our own domestic supply. We now import more than 60 percent of our oil from foreign countries - making us twice as dependent on foreign oil as we were just 30 years ago.

Domestic exploration has been at a standstill as plentiful resources at home have been kept off limits. Our nation has up to two trillion barrels in energy reserves in Alaska, off our coasts, and in oil shale. These supplies alone amount to an energy source that could power the United States for two centuries at current consumption levels. Importantly, 21st century technology allows U.S. energy producers to recover these resources in an environmentally-safe way. Although there is no overnight solution to this problem, I believe we must increase our efforts to explore these American energy reserves. I also support incentives to increase the development of renewable energy resources and believe they will continue to be an important and growing part of our energy supply portfolio. When it comes to energy, I believe we should be doing 'all of the above.' By pursuing increased American-energy production we will begin to lessen our reliance on foreign nations, some hostile and unstable, for our energy needs.

[Share your thoughts](#)

Coming Up Soon

Investing in Renewable Energy

American energy security remains a hot topic across California and the U.S. In addition to increasing our own conventional energy supply through environmentally-safe exploration of American energy reserves, it's critical to our energy future that we continue to invest in solar, biomass, wind, and other renewable energy technologies. Investments in renewable energy are important to California and the North State in particular. In fact, Butte County leads the nation in per capita renewable energy production. However, many of the federal tax incentives that have fostered this innovation will expire at the end of this year unless Congress takes action.

Recently, I joined 87 other members of Congress in calling for House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to [act immediately on extending these vital incentives](#)

. We still have a long way to go to attain energy independence, and we can't afford to stop investing in clean, renewable, American-made energy.

[Share your thoughts](#)

North Korea's Remains a Concern

President Bush recently [announced](#) his intention to remove North Korea from the list of state sponsors of terror and to marginally reduce sanctions against that nation after North Korea disclosed important information about its plutonium-generated nuclear program. While North Korea's action was a step in the right direction, I'm very concerned by its failure to disclose information about its existing stockpile of nuclear weapons, its uranium-based nuclear program, and its past activities in sharing nuclear technology with hostile nations such as Syria. North Korea has a history of lying about the nature of its nuclear programs and violating agreements pertaining to them. As a result, I believe the United States must respond cautiously to North Korea's promises and purported revelations, and continue to work with our allies to demand complete and accurate answers to remaining questions about its nuclear activities. Only upon verifying that North Korea is completely nuclear-free can the United States and international community consider North Korea a non-threatening nation.

[Share your thoughts](#)

District News

New Child Development Center for Beale

Congress recently approved \$17.6 million for a much-needed new [Child Development Center](#) at Beale Air Force Base as part of the wartime supplemental appropriations bill. The new facility will provide our young airmen with families at Beale the peace of mind that their children are in a safe, high-quality environment while on base. This significant upgrade will bolster quality of life for our men and women in uniform and help Beale maintain its reputation as one of the finest military bases in our nation. I'm very pleased this project can now go forward.

Students Accepted at U.S. Service Academies



<http://www.house.gov/berger/academy.shtml>