

Michael E. Capuano

CONGRESSMAN

8th Congressional District, Massachusetts



Serving Belmont, half of Boston, Cambridge, Chelsea, Somerville and Watertown.

America at War

My office is receiving countless calls from constituents expressing their opinions about our nation's response to the terrorist attacks. Most strongly support the use of force. Some believe we should not have taken military action. I appreciate all of your thoughts, and thank you for taking the time to let us know how you feel.

It's important to state my belief that the United States is at war and the war must be won. Thousands of our innocent citizens were murdered. Hundreds of legal immigrants, who believed the United States to be a land of hope and opportunity, perished with them. If we do not take action against such atrocities, they will continue. All rational people understand that it is probably not possible to stop every terrorist. But we owe it to our future security to try. Once the war is won, America must lead the way in rebuilding Afghanistan and fulfilling our country's historic role as a beacon of hope for all humanity.

The Anthrax Attacks

Those who were infected with anthrax are also victims of a terrorist attack, this time carried out through our mail system. Although we are still not certain who is responsible for tainting our mail, this crime displays the same disregard for human life as the attacks upon New York and the Pentagon. That is why I filed legislation to assist those infected with anthrax and their families. The "Anthrax Victims' Assistance Act" will expand the *September 11th Victim Compensation Fund of 2001* to include any individual who is diagnosed with anthrax between September 11, 2001 and December 31, 2001. Those infected with anthrax or their survivors will be eligible for financial assistance. It is only fitting that we provide the same level of assistance to anthrax victims as we are providing to the victims of September 11th.



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2108

MICHAEL E. CAPUANO
8TH DISTRICT, MASSACHUSETTS

Dear Friend:

All Americans will forever remember where we were on the morning of September 11th. In a few tragic moments, thousands of lives were lost and the world changed forever. As your representative in Congress, I thought it was important to report back to you, my constituents, about the impact of these horrific events.

Amid the horror, we saw acts of heroism and generosity that made us proud to be Americans. Over the following days and weeks, the tragedy united us. Americans of every race and religion and immigrants from many countries died that day, victims of unimaginable hatred. Americans also learned that we were not alone in our grief. My local office received expressions of sympathy and support from all over the world, including a *Book of Condolences* from the African community of Massachusetts.

The terrorist attacks resulted in a fundamental priority shift for President Bush and Congress. In the House of Representatives, we went from debating tax cuts to focusing all our attention on national security, anti-terrorism measures and economic recovery. In a matter of weeks, we authorized the President to use force in disrupting the terrorist networks. We also approved a relief package to finance the recovery from the attacks and debated a stimulus package designed to jump-start the economy.

Congress cannot be expected to agree unanimously on how to address these important issues. Certainly, there is nothing wrong with honest differences of opinion, but we are trying to work together for the good of our country.

Many issues that were priorities before September 11th have been placed on the back burner. We haven't passed an energy package, we haven't created a prescription drug program and we haven't stabilized Medicare. We certainly haven't forgotten about these vital issues and I look forward to the time when we can turn our attention to them.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions or just want to voice your opinion about an issue. These are uncertain times but, as Americans, we have much to be thankful for.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike".

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How to Fight Terrorism?

In the wake of September 11th, Congress has focused on ways to prevent such horrific acts from happening again. It's not an easy question and many members of Congress have come up with different answers. One approach was to pass legislation that significantly expands the powers given to law enforcement officials. I voted **against** this legislation due to deep concerns about our country. The bill that passed didn't do enough to protect those freedoms upon which our country was founded. The bill allows investigators to track e-mail without a search warrant, conduct property searches without first contacting the owner, loosens restrictions on confidential school records, and much more. Although I supported many features of the bill, many others were unacceptable.

Passage of that bill opened the door for the President's extraordinary Executive Order on military tribunals. In the past, these wartime powers have been used in isolated and specific instances – and I would support such action again. However, I cannot accept that one man can lay down the law, in matters of life and death, for literally millions of people. The President should have worked with Congress to set trial procedures that preserved national security and reasonable due process. He may eventually limit the authority he has tried to assume to an acceptable level. Nevertheless, I strongly believe that the attempt to seize unheard of powers should concern all Americans who cherish their own freedoms and their moral leadership in the world.

Airport Security Legislation

After weeks of negotiations, Congress passed a bill to increase security at our nation's airports. I strongly **supported** this legislation because it will do much to close the security gaps that currently exist. It is an important practical and symbolic step to improve confidence in air travel. The legislation puts the federal government in charge of airport screening, expands the air marshals program on flights and requires the strengthening of all cockpit doors. It also requires airports to increase inspection of checked bags immediately, and to implement complete inspection within a year. This legislation will lead to vastly improved security measures at our nation's airports, which is a critical component of recovery efforts.

Congressman Capuano recently visited the Kennedy Elementary School in Somerville to learn about the fifth grade class' feelings regarding the events of September 11th. The students presented him with a play the class wrote in honor of America's heroes. Pictured with the Congressman: Chakri Amarina, Justin DaSilva and Anthony Coleman.

Shoring up the Economy

Even before the events of September 11th, our economy was slowing and budget surplus projections were shrinking. As I write to you, Democrats and Republicans are in serious disagreement over what should be included in an economic stimulus package. Under the Republican plan passed in the House (which I opposed), large corporations stand to receive hundreds of millions of dollars in a variety of corporate tax provisions. I don't think this type of action will stimulate the economy in any way. Furthermore, this proposal does not do much to help Americans who have lost their jobs.

The Democratic proposal, which I strongly supported, represented a well-balanced approach to providing real economic stimulus. It provided a tax rebate to low-income workers who did not receive a tax-rebate check this year. It also increased and extended unemployment and health care benefits for those who have lost jobs. This proposal also gave targeted tax relief to businesses, provided financing for school construction and repair, and funding to secure our nation's infrastructure. It represents a balanced approach to helping those most in need of assistance and stimulating our economy for the benefit of all.

At this writing, the Senate has not passed an economic stimulus package and members of both chambers are meeting to craft a compromise. The outcome is unclear at this point, but you can be sure that I will fight for the package that best serves those who need it the most and will not support a giveaway that fails to stimulate our economy.

