



CONGRESSMAN

# John J. Duncan, Jr.

## Washington Report

Second District—Tennessee

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# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

### ✓ **The Budget**

The proposed Fiscal 2005 budget would result in a deficit of \$521 billion. This is simply too much and comes on top of federal debt that will reach \$7.4 trillion this summer. The Congressional Budget Office predicts this year's deficit will be \$477 billion following last year's \$375 billion. This adds up to an astounding \$1.37 trillion in just three years if the projections for the next year and a half are anywhere close to being accurate. Charlie Cook, one of the most-respected national political analysts, gave a talk a few months ago and said he had never seen a figure over one million that astounded anyone. He said people got upset about the Defense Department buying \$600 hammers or \$900 toilet seats but they could not really comprehend figures in the billions. This may be true, but federal deficits and debt as huge as we are facing holds our economy back and means that almost everyone is making significantly less than they should be. More importantly, it puts our future on very shaky financial footing. The federal government will not be able to pay Social Security, military and civil service pensions in the very near future without greatly inflating our money and greatly increasing taxes on our children and grandchildren. Columnist Robert Samuelson wrote recently in *Newsweek*: "Just for the record, the Congressional Budget Office recently issued a report telling us what everyone already knows: the federal budget is drifting into a future of unprecedented tax increases, huge deficits or both. This is no secret because the great driving force of change is the impending retirement of 77 million baby boomers and their heavy claims on federal retirement programs. But in Washington, the

CBO's irrefutable conclusion won't produce any noticeable reaction because there's already a firmly established bipartisan policy concerning the future: forget about it." In 2000, there were 35 million people over age 65; by 2030, that figure will be twice as high. Already, Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid take 40% of the federal budget. On Feb. 27<sup>th</sup>, the CBO issued an even more shocking forecast, predicting total federal deficits over the next 10 years of \$2.75 trillion.

### ✓ **The Economy**

President Harry Truman once said in frustration that what he needed was a one-armed economist. He said the ones that advised him were always saying some things "on the one hand" and then opposite things "on the other hand." That is true today, too. Hardly anyone who has really studied the situation believes we will be able to pay Social Security, federal, and military pensions in the near future with dollars that will be of much value unless the Congress becomes much more fiscally-conservative and does so very, very soon. On the other hand, there is still some hope for the future because the tax cuts passed over the last couple of years have had a very positive effect, and the economy right now is much stronger than most people realize. The last week of February, the revised figures for the previous quarter showed growth at an annual rate of 4.1%. This is very strong. In late January, it was reported that jobless claims were the lowest in three years, manufacturers reported hiring was the highest in four years, the percentage of small businesses planning to hire was the highest in five years, and 1.9 million salaried workers were added in 2003, the best since

2000. *Business Week* Magazine reported in its Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup> issue that U.S. manufacturing activity had its biggest monthly increase in 20 years this past December. The story said: "Surging profits and a soaring stock market have finally convinced many corporate leaders that the recovery is here to stay. Increasingly, worries about spending too much and getting ahead of demand are giving way to fears that if they don't act now, they risk missing out on the upswing." *The Christian Science Monitor*, one of our most respected daily newspapers, carried a story on June 15, 2000, with a headline saying "Economy Slowing Dramatically." This was seven months before President Bush came into office. Most economists say we are six months into a recession before people feel it and six months out of one before most realize it. While we have major problems now, like the job market for college graduates due to the trade deficit and extremely high health care costs, almost all present economic indicators are good. It is in the not-too-distant future that we will face the worst financial problems we have ever had if we do not start soon to bring down these huge trade and federal deficits. As Federal Reserve Chairman Greenspan testified recently, the Country could boom if we could leave the tax cuts in place and drastically reduce federal spending.

### ✓ **Veterans Home**

I was very pleased to have helped obtain approval for \$10.6 million in federal funds for a veterans nursing home for East Tennessee. This is something I and my staff have worked on for several years. We received informal, tentative approval several years ago for this project from the Veterans

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Administration. However, the State decided not to give its approval because it had veterans nursing homes in Middle and West Tennessee that were not 100% full (although they were very close). However, East Tennessee has by far the largest population of veterans in the State, and veterans groups, led by Gerald Clark of Knoxville, made this their number one priority. The veterans population is aging, and the need for this type of facility is great. Knox County provided part of the funding and donated land off of the Pellissippi Parkway. Final federal approval was obtained in January, and the Home is scheduled to be completed late next year. Federal appropriations for the Veterans Administration have gone from \$28.9 billion in my first year in office to a proposed \$67.5 billion in Fiscal 2005, or an increase of almost three times the rate of inflation over that period.

### ✓Jobs

My main concern in recent years has been the continued loss of jobs to other countries. We were told for several years that we did not need to worry about the low-tech, assembly line jobs going to other nations, because we would replace them with high-tech, more skilled employment. Now we are seeing these jobs go to India, China, and other places. One study done recently at the University of California at Berkeley predicts the loss of 15,000,000 more high-tech jobs over the next 10 years. I have been speaking out about this on the floor of the House, in meetings with other members, in radio and TV appearances, and in various writings. For several years now, millions of college graduates have been unable to find good jobs, so most are going to some type of graduate school. However, now it is difficult to find good jobs even with advanced degrees. We have lost millions of jobs and made it much more difficult to create new ones by a combination of high health care costs, high taxes, and excessive government rules, regulations, and red tape. Wealthy environmental extremists have become the best friends extremely big business has by giving us high energy costs and environmental regulations that have destroyed thousands of small businesses and small farms. The last administration locked up 213 trillion

cubic feet of natural gas, and we are now seeing much higher utility costs for businesses and homes. I have cosponsored legislation in the House with two other Members to prohibit government agencies from sending work to foreign countries. A similar anti-outsourcing amendment passed the Senate on March 4<sup>th</sup> by a vote of 70-26.

### ✓The Future

John Snow, now Secretary of the Treasury and formerly head of CSX Railroad, served on the U.T. Development Board and helped raise money for the University. He is a fine man in a very difficult job. In a March interview in *USA Today*, he made the following optimistic statement which I hope will come true, directed to today's college students who are understandably worried about jobs: "I went to college four decades ago. I can't tell them what their next job will be, but I can reflect back. I didn't have any notion there was going to be a *USA Today* or cellphones, let alone cellphones with video games, e-mail, and Internet access. I never heard of Intel, microprocessors, or nanotechnology. What we have to do is keep this extraordinarily versatile and dynamic economy open, let it work. Talented, ambitious people will create the jobs of the future if they have access to capital, to education, to second and third chances — which is really one of the great things about America. I can't tell that person what his or her next job is. But by nurturing innovation, keeping the system open and free, letting people test out ideas, fail, get up and go again, we'll continue to lead the world."

### ✓Bankruptcies

The main reason that U.S. consumption has been so high is that many millions are living to the hilt of their incomes or even beyond, often buying things they do not really need. Thus, personal bankruptcies reached an all time high of 1.7 million last year. Unfortunately, personal bankruptcies have been setting records for the last three or four years. In part, this has been because our bankruptcy laws have been too lax, but mostly it is simple overspending. We have been trying to toughen up some on our bankruptcy laws, because the National Retail Federation, among

others, has estimated that bankruptcies are costing the average consumer between \$400 and \$500 a year. Consumer debt has now reached an astounding figure just below two trillion dollars. We spend much more and save much less per person than people in most other developed nations. We should remove the taxes on interest and dividends to encourage more savings and investment in this Country.

### ✓Education Policy

I voted against the "No Child Left Behind" law because I do not believe our Country can remain free and prosperous if the federal government tries to control or dictate everything and because I believe our Tennessee principals and teachers are intelligent enough to run our schools without orders from bureaucrats in Washington. The *Washington Post* reported a few days ago: "Resistance that began in New England last year over the implementation of the broadest education reforms in a generation has spread to several southern and western states with Republicans joining Democrats in criticizing a plan that once enjoyed bipartisan support." Republican controlled Houses in both Virginia and Utah have within the last few weeks requested out of portions of the law. But an official of the National Conference of State Legislatures said opposition was coming equally from both parties. Gov. Bredesen called it "a perfect example of what people call an unfunded federal mandate." Chester Finn, a conservative education expert, told CNN one problem is the law asks "broken school districts to fix broken schools."

### ✓District Projects

When I know that an appropriation bill is going to easily pass the Congress, I try my best to get as much as possible for our District. Some of the recent items my office was able to help get passed include:

- \$1.9 million for the planned Knoxville Intermodal Transit Center
- \$571,000 for renovations and restoration of the Bijou Theatre
- \$1.9 million for the McMinn County Airport
- \$894,000 for the Foothills Parkway
- \$99,000 for a Monroe County Job Access Commute program

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- \$940,000 for Knoxville and Knox County's Job Access Commute program

- \$198,000 for the Knox County Senior Citizen's Home Assistance program

- \$990,000 for continued funding of Knoxville's Empowerment Zone

Most of the projects we are able to help with have been identified as priorities by local community leaders or are for programs in our area that seem to be doing good things for our Nation.

#### ✓**District Grants**

I am pleased to be able to help local organizations obtain grants from the federal government. Local educational institutions, governmental agencies and non-profit entities perform valuable research and help citizens across the Country. Some grants announced recently include: \$7 million to local public housing agencies including the Athens, Etowah, Knox County, Lenoir City, Loudon County, Maryville and Sweetwater Housing Authorities, as well as Knoxville's Community Development Corporation; \$1.5 million to the City of Loudon for improvements to the City's water and electrical system infrastructure; \$500,000 to the Metropolitan Knoxville Airport Authority to attract a low-fare airline; \$1.2 million to Steps House, Inc., to care for local homeless veterans; \$300,000 to the Monroe County Health Clinic; \$450,000 to help rehabilitate the Madisonville sewer system; \$10,000 to the Knoxville Opera Company; \$49,000 for the rehabilitation of Fort Loudoun State Historic Park; \$1.48 million for the UT Center for Environmental Biotechnology for NASA research; and \$52,000 to the East Tennessee Development District to continue its economic planning and development operations.

#### ✓**Fair Tax**

Almost every poll taken on the subject of our federal tax code shows that 80 or 85% or more favor major reform. Our present system is so complicated, convoluted and confusing that much of the advice the IRS itself gives out is wrong, if you can even by some minor miracle get them on the phone in the first place. Most people believe we should just throw away the present code and start over. No system is perfect, but we can and should do much better, and I have

now cosponsored a plan known as the Fair Tax. This plan was recently endorsed by the American Farm Bureau Federation, one of our Nation's largest and most-respected organizations. This system would lower taxes substantially for everyone who is now paying what they are supposed to be paying. First, individuals and families would not have to file any returns at all. Conservative estimates are that \$250 billion would be saved in compliance and filing costs. Second, the criminals and illegal aliens and others working "off the books" would have to start paying federal taxes. Under our present system, honest taxpayers are having to pay the taxes not paid by the criminals and others in the underground economy. This underground economy is estimated to be at least one trillion and means taxes presently being illegally avoided of another \$250 billion. These two items alone, if eliminated, would mean a savings to all those who are legally paying what they owe of over \$1,700 per person, or almost \$7,000 per family of four. Third, a Harvard professor who has studied the Fair Tax has estimated prices would go down an average of 22% because of the elimination of business taxes. Fourth, more jobs would be created because American companies would gain an advantage they do not now have over foreign competitors, and there would be more money available to invest in small businesses because savings and dividends would no longer be taxed. This plan would eliminate all individual income taxes, all payroll taxes, self-employment taxes, estate and gift taxes, and corporate income taxes. These taxes would be replaced by a national sales tax which I believe would be much lower than some people now estimate because of the good things that would happen to the economy and because of the revenue gained from people who are now cheating. Every family would receive a rebate of all taxes paid up to the federal poverty guidelines, presently \$24,240 for a family of four (thus their federal tax rate would be 0). A family of four that spends \$50,000 a year would pay \$5,925, or 11.9%; \$100,000, the rate would be 17.4%; \$250,000, 20.8%, and so on. The Fair Tax is the only proposal, including current law, that completely untaxes the poor by 1) eliminating the payroll tax, a highly regressive tax

that only targets wages, 2) eliminating hidden federal taxes that businesses pass on to the consumer in the form of higher prices, and 3) assuring that no American pays taxes on spending up to the poverty level. There is fast-growing interest in this plan, yet I do not believe it will pass for a few years, if ever. The opposition is small, but very powerful. It includes major corporations with big tax loopholes, those who make money off our complicated system, and especially the IRS and the tax-writing committees of the Congress, who would lose much of their power with a greatly-simplified system. However, I think it is important to begin the dialog so that more and more people will realize there is a much better way to collect taxes than we have now.

#### ✓**Prescription Drugs**

The Food and Drug Administration became so big and bureaucratic in recent years that it ended up taking many years and hundreds of millions to get a drug approved. This meant only huge drug companies had a chance to get a drug approved, and the price of medicine skyrocketed. As a result, there has been a great demand for the government to pay for prescriptions for senior citizens. I voted for two such bills, but both came when we had federal surpluses. With the huge deficit we are now facing, we cannot afford the prescription drug bill we passed. However, I voted for it with very great reluctance. We were told in no uncertain terms that if we did not pass the bill that was before us, the Administration was going to be forced to go to more liberal members and pass a much more expensive bill. Also, the more liberal bill would not have some of the more conservative items like medical savings accounts, cost-saving competition provisions, and more money for rural hospitals (an additional \$26 million for hospitals in the Second District). Thus we were placed in a real "Catch 22" situation. However, we were told the bill would cost \$395 billion over 10 years. Now, the Administration's budget estimates this program will cost \$534 billion over 10 years. I will not vote to fund this program if it becomes too expensive, and I am supporting efforts to limit the cost to the original estimates. There is at least one major misunderstanding about this program

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already. When it begins in full in 2006, it will be voluntary. If someone has a better prescription plan through their retirement, they do not have to participate. I have also voted several times to allow any American citizens who want to purchase lower-priced drugs from Canada to do so.

#### ✓Patriot Act

I doubt there has ever been such a nationwide, grassroots rebellion against a federal law as is now going on against the misnamed "Patriot Act." This revolt is a peaceful movement being led, not by criminals and terrorists, but by law-abiding citizens, both liberal and conservative, all across this Nation. An absolutely astounding 259 cities and towns, large and small, have passed resolutions against this law. The feeling is that federal prosecutors have been given far too much power (even before the Patriot Act) and have often abused that power, sometimes simply for publicity or vendetta-type purposes. The arrogant response by the government was to seek an expansion of this law under "Patriot II" legislation even while denying it was doing so. An expansion of the Patriot Act was inserted into the

Intelligence Reauthorization Bill late last November. These provisions would allow federal agents to obtain records of transactions from financial institutions, car dealers, travel agents, pawnbrokers, and many others without court orders. Rep. Ron Paul (R-TX) said this was "a stealth enactment of the enormously unpopular 'Patriot II' legislation" and that there was such an outcry against a leaked draft of this Bill that it "has led its supporters to enact it one piece at a time in secret." I voted against this authorization bill and for an amendment to another bill to limit the scope of the original Patriot Act. Many members, however, did not realize the intelligence bill had some of these provisions in it, in part, because it had not come through the Judiciary Committee. John Rutherford, founder and President of the conservative Rutherford Institute and a constitutional lawyer, wrote: "Under the Authorization Act, the FBI now has the power to subpoena business records of nearly every kind of financial transaction and conduct what is, in effect, a search and seizure without demonstrating probable cause that criminal activity is afoot." He said these subpoena powers are secret.

"Thus the recipient cannot even disclose having received one. And these subpoenas can be issued by relatively low-level bureaucrats without going to any court."

#### ✓Tax Cuts

Some people have suggested that Congress roll back the so-called "Bush" tax cuts because of the impending huge deficits. I agree with Federal Reserve Chairman Greenspan who has testified several times that the Nation could boom economically (lower prices, more jobs, etc.) if we would both keep the tax cuts in place and reduce the increases in federal spending enough to eliminate the deficits very soon. Unfortunately, we will not bring the deficits down soon enough to create boom conditions, but the tax cuts have been the main things giving us the economic strength we have had in recent months. The biggest and by far the great majority of the total tax cuts have been the rate reductions, child tax benefits, estate tax cuts, dividend provisions, marriage penalty relief, and education savings accounts. The biggest rate reductions have been at the lower and middle-income levels. The child tax credit increases have been a big help to families. The marriage penalty provisions have averaged over \$1,400 per couple. The estate tax reductions have helped many small businesses and family farms not have to be sold to pay the tax bill. The dividend provisions have helped increase investments and keep the stock markets high. The education breaks will help many families pay big increases in college expenses.

#### ✓Family Finances

The federal budget situation is much like the financial situation facing a family — too much debt leads to big trouble. If a family can afford a \$100,000 home but buys a \$300,000 one, it has difficulty even making the payments. Then other needs go unmet. Also, repairs or improvements cannot be made. And if unexpected expenses pop up in other areas, the problems get even worse. About 20 years or so ago, I read in *The Wall Street Journal* that many farms that had survived the Great Depression were going through foreclosures. The article said the fathers and grandfathers had remained small and had not gone into debt. However,



*Congressman Duncan invited Admiral James Loy, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, to the Second District to learn more about federally funded activities in East Tennessee, especially those projects related to National and Homeland security. Shown above are Tom Jensen with the National Safe Skies Alliance, Admiral Loy, Congressman Duncan, Gerald Boyd, Manager of Oak Ridge Operations for the Department of Energy and Jeffrey Wadsworth, Director of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory.*

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the younger, better educated farmers had been convinced that they had to get big and buy the newest equipment and had been enticed by low interest government loans and had gone deeply in debt. The result was that a record number were losing their farms primarily because of excessive debt. Federal spending goes way up every year. Those who want their Social Security and federal pensions to be paid in full and with money that has real purchasing power have got to start demanding that the Congress cut spending or at least hold it level for a few years.

### ✓ **First Responders**

I have been very pleased in recent years to help local law enforcement agencies, fire departments and hospitals obtain grants and direct appropriations from the federal government. These organizations do a great service for the citizens of the Second District, and I am proud to be able to assist them. Recent grants and direct appropriations to these first responders include: \$198,820 to the Loudon County Sheriff's Department; \$1.2 million to the Knoxville Sheriff's Department; \$700,000 to Knoxville's Regional Community Policing Institute; \$216,630 to the Lenoir City Fire Department; \$87,165 to the Tellico Village Fire Department; \$105,185 to the Niota Volunteer Fire Department; \$185,602 to the North Monroe Volunteer Fire Department; \$198,820 to East Tennessee Children's Hospital; \$844,985 to the University of Tennessee Hospital

### ✓ **College Tuition**

Several columnists and education experts have pointed out that since the start of the federal student loan program in 1965, college and university tuition and fees have gone up about three or four times the rate of inflation. For many years, there was little opposition to increases because students were told not to worry, they could just get a low-interest government loan. Now, many young people are getting out of school with huge student loan debts, especially if they have gone to a private school. According to College Board and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, tuition and fees have increased almost 300% in the last 20 years while inflation over the same period has been

84.7%. If the figures since 1965 are included, the increase over the rate of inflation is even greater. There is now so much concern that legislative remedies are being seriously considered. In the March 8<sup>th</sup> *U.S. News and World Report*, Editor-In-Chief Mortimer Zuckerman wrote an editorial about this problem. He noted there was a 14% increase in tuition last year alone at public four-year colleges and universities and said "only the well-off can afford a college education these days." Nothing will happen this year, but if these whopping increases continue, the Congress will be forced to take action.

### ✓ **Academic Freedom**

Almost every college and university in this Country receives a large amount of federal money through grants, appropriations, or student loan funds. Yet, writer David Brooks pointed out in the *Atlantic Monthly* Magazine that there is less true academic freedom and diversity on college campuses than almost any place else. Conservative students often feel they cannot express their true views on papers or in class or they will be penalized on their grades. Mr. Brooks wrote: "It is striking that the institutions that talk the most about diversity often practice it the least. For example, no group of people sings the diversity anthem more frequently and fervently than administrators at our elite universities. But elite universities are amazingly undiverse in their values, politics, and mores. Professors, in particular, are drawn from a rather narrow segment of the population." He said it is human nature that "people want to be around others who are roughly like themselves" and that it would be "psychologically difficult" for most liberal professors "to share an office with someone who was pro-life, a member of the National Rifle Association, or an evangelical Christian." He said university hiring committees, perhaps unconsciously, screen out such people. Congressman Jack Kingston (R-GA) recently held a press conference about this with several college students from around the Country and introduced a resolution calling on universities to seek more diversity in their faculties and speakers and to be more tolerant of conservative students and professors.

### ✓ **TVA Bonuses**

I believe the present TVA Board is the best, or certainly one of the best, the Agency has ever had. Some Board members, especially in the late 70s and 80s, ran up such huge debts that at one point TVA was paying 34 cents of every dollar it spent just to service debt. This debt had to be brought under control. This Board has helped bring this expense down to 19 cents on the dollar and has paid off significant amounts of the debt, although it is still too high. However, I have a respectful disagreement with their continuation of the practice of awarding bonuses to top-level TVA executives. Sometimes these bonuses are called by other names such as deferred compensation or retirement incentive packages and so forth. This year, 136 executives received these payments. For several years, I have criticized these bonuses as being excessive and unnecessary. Many of these payments have been at the six-figure level and a few have been over \$1,000,000. Federal agencies can rationalize or justify almost anything, and TVA claims it will lose employees to the private sector if these bonuses are not paid. Yet, TVA has a very low attrition rate, and these bonuses are being paid not long after a rate hike and in a time when forced layoffs may soon occur. All government employees are underpaid if they compare their salary to the ridiculous ones of athletes and a few top CEOs instead of to the 98% of the people who make less than they do. East Tennessee is one of the most popular places to move to in the whole Country, and people can live well here for far less than in the Northeast or most big cities. No one is irreplaceable, and I do not believe any federal employee should ever be paid more than the President (now \$400,000 a year). I cannot pass legislation prohibiting these bonuses, because most Members of the Tennessee Congressional Delegation - all friends of mine - disagree with me on this. But if more people do not speak out against this practice, these payments will grow much larger and more numerous in the future.

### ✓ **Terrorism**

We must take the threat of terrorism seriously, but if we go overboard, then we would be giving undeserved victories to the terrorists. Actually, what

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concerns me is that I believe our eagerness to fight a war that was not really necessary has made terrorism more likely. Richard Cohen, a columnist for *The Washington Post*, wrote recently: "What evidence exists suggests, in fact, that the United States was hankering for a war no matter what. Intelligence - - - no matter how fragmentary or inconclusive - - - was shaped, molded, and goosed until it could be used to prove that Hussein had to be taken out swiftly." I hope more of my fellow conservatives will soon wake up and realize that an unnecessary war and a greatly-exaggerated threat of terrorism are being used to expand government at a faster rate than any time in our history. While we need to take the threat of terrorism seriously, we need to stop stationing our troops in almost every foreign country, and we need to heed the words of former Virginia Governor, James Gilmore, who headed the federal commission studying the threat of terrorism and what to do about it. He wrote: "There will never be a 100% guarantee of security for our people, the economy, and our society. We must resist the urge to seek total security - - - it is not achievable and drains our attention from those things that can be accomplished."

#### ✓ **Brownfields**

After Chairing the Aviation Subcommittee for the maximum six years allowable, I am now in my fourth year as Chairman of the Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee. This Subcommittee has oversight jurisdiction over several agencies, with the largest being the Army Corps of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency. We have passed several bills, and while it is not the largest, one of the most important was the Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields Revitalization Act. This bill was signed into law in 2002 and gives communities all across the Nation the tools they need to reclaim and restore thousands of brownfields sites. Brownfields are properties where expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated by the presence, actual or potential, of a contaminant. Brownfields include such things as abandoned gas stations or old industrial properties. The Act expands federal funding for brownfields assess-

ments and cleanup and limits the liability of prospective purchasers, innocent landowners, and contiguous property owners. Pursuant to the new law, EPA provided 50 cleanup grants in 2003; it has provided 66 brownfields-related job-training and redevelopment demonstration projects; and EPA has now funded 171 revolving loan fund pilot projects to state and local governments, totaling \$171 million.

#### ✓ **Indecency**

Some commentators said and wrote that people were making too big a deal out of a brief exposure by Janet Jackson during the halftime show at the Super Bowl. I believe they misunderstood why the great majority of people were so upset or disgusted by what happened. First, people were upset by the entire show which apparently (I did not watch the halftime performance) contained other obscene or sexually suggestive actions. Second, and much more importantly, I believe this was the culmination of many years of just far too many indecent or immoral things on television and in the movies. Sadly, we have almost lost the ability to be shocked. Just think how far we have come since the Nation was shocked by Clark Gable's famous line in *Gone With the Wind*. Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-NY) said several years ago that we have been "defining deviancy down, accepting as part of life what we once found repugnant." Thus, it was good that so many people got so fed up and felt enough was enough after the Super Bowl show. I will support the Federal Communications Commission if it (hopefully) cracks down on sexually explicit television shows. Also, I hope we will get federal judges who will rule that freedom of speech should not and does not include obscenity and pornography.

#### ✓ **Huge Waste**

Just four days apart in late February, the Pentagon made two announcements that are mind-boggling in the amounts that have been wasted. First came the news that a new Joint Strike Fighter aircraft will cost about \$40 billion, \$7,000,000,000 more than estimated, because the Pentagon wants a one-year delay to change the design and add more "bells and whistles." Then, it was announced that the Comanche helicop-

ter program was being abandoned after 21 years of escalating costs, technological glitches, and redesigns and not one aircraft produced — another \$7,000,000,000 down the drain. No one could appreciate or respect military service more than I do. But the problem with big government is that no one is really held accountable for staggering waste like this. The easiest thing in the world is to spend other people's money, and there is no real incentive or pressure to hold down costs. Everyone, both in and out of the military, is going to have to demand more fiscal responsibility from those at the Pentagon, or we will see even worse examples of waste there in the future.

#### ✓ **Illegal Immigration**

The one thing big government has been phenomenally successful at is creating poverty even in countries with tremendous reserves of oil, natural gas, coal, gold or abundant agricultural areas. *Newsweek* reported several months ago that half the people in this world have to get by on \$2.00 or less a day. A columnist in the *News Sentinel* a few weeks ago put it a little differently, saying half the people do not have a faucet with running water or own a second pair of shoes. It is easy to understand why so many want to come here from other nations, and I admire and respect the immigrants who are such hard workers. However, we simply cannot open our borders to anyone who wants to come, or we would have so many millions so fast we simply could not handle it. In late January, the *Los Angeles Times Magazine* had a story about all the problems caused by almost massive immigration. The sub-headline said: "A human wave is breaking over California, flooding freeways and schools, bloating housing costs, disrupting power and water supplies. Ignoring it hasn't worked." Today, official government estimates are that we have about 10 million illegal immigrants in the U.S. Many people believe the figure may really be about three times that high. There is a right way to do things and a wrong way. We must have a limited, orderly, legal system of immigration that is enforced. We should allow local law enforcement to handle most of this, because the INS is failing despite an almost tripling of funding over the last decade. I do not

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support the proposal to grant a form of amnesty to illegal immigrants, because this would simply encourage many more to come here illegally.

✓ **Private Property**

Many people do not realize how important private property is to our freedom and our prosperity. The federal government now owns over 30% of the land, and state and local governments and quasi-government entities own another 20%. Half the land is in some type of public ownership, and government at all levels keeps putting more and more restrictions on the land that is still private. Richard W. Rahn, a senior fellow of the Discovery Institute, wrote recently: "Government-owned land is removed from the tax base, so it not only costs everyone to maintain it but the government also loses tax revenue. When land is removed from private use by government ownership or unreasonable use restrictions, it reduces the supply of land, thus driving up housing prices." Because of government taking or restricting the use of land, more and more people are being forced into smaller and smaller areas or developments. You can never satisfy government's appetite for land or money, and we desperately need to elect more people at all levels who will pledge to stop taking private property.

✓ **Trillion Dollar Mistake**

Columnist Thomas Sowell, an economist at the Hoover Institution at Stanford, wrote recently: "It is precisely the government which has made it virtually impossible to build affordable

housing in places like Coastal California and other places where there are severe land use restrictions, such as open-space laws, as well as rent control and a crushing amount of red tape – which ought to be called green tape because of the environmental extremists behind much of it. Today we have gotten used to the idea that the government will take care of the poor by putting them in housing projects. We have also gotten used to seeing videotape of public housing projects being demolished. What has not been demolished, however, are the unsubstantiated assumptions behind these disastrous social experiments. Just mention 'the projects,' and people recoil at the thought of all the crime, violence, drugs and single-parent families with multiple problems." He points out a new book about government housing policies by a Harvard professor entitled *America's Trillion-Dollar Housing Mistake*.

✓ **Iraq Visit**

I had the privilege of leading a bi-partisan Congressional delegation to Iraq in late January. The group was limited to six members for security reasons and included members from Oregon, Illinois, Ohio, Arkansas, and Oklahoma, as well as myself. We had briefings from Ambassador Bremer and all the top military leaders and their staffs. We visited with many of the troops and those at the main hospital in Baghdad and had two meals with soldiers from our home states. We also took many boxes of gifts donated by major corporations such as bags from

Boeing, desserts from Bama Corp., hats from the St. Louis Rams, 2000 50-minute phone cards from AT&T, and things soldiers had requested like wet-wipes, M&Ms, Frisbees, and soccer balls. We met many brave and wonderful young people who are doing a great job at what they have been ordered to do. Over and over, we were told that our soldiers feel good about doing so many kind and generous things for the people of Iraq, but that they want to come home as soon as possible. We also were told that the people of Iraq do not want us running their country. They very clearly want our money, and we have spent about \$200 billion so far and will spend much more in the years ahead. We also were told that the turnover on July 1<sup>st</sup> will mainly be a formality and that Iraq will not be ready for full-scale, American-style elections for probably at least two years. The only elections held soon will be very limited, caucus-style elections involving people who are working with, or at least not fighting, the United States. Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, the main architect of the Iraq war, told the House Armed Services Committee a few months ago that we would have to have soldiers in that Country for at least 10 years.

✓ **Foreign Aid**

Those who favor foreign aid found out many years ago that it is very unpopular. So they simply started doing it through almost every department or agency of the federal government, especially the Defense Department. Those who say foreign aid is only a tiny portion of the federal budget either do not realize how much we are spending throughout the government or they are intentionally misleading people. Most of the \$200 billion we have spent in Iraq has been on foreign aid type programs. One U.S. general told me proudly that he would have 110,000 Iraqis working for him by July 1<sup>st</sup>, and he controlled only about 1/8 of the population. One major magazine said before the war we would make Iraq the 51<sup>st</sup> state. Sen. George Voinovich (R-OH) told one reporter: "Look at the needs we have here at home with our roads, sewers, and water projects. It's hard to tell people there isn't money for sewers and water and then send that kind of money to Iraq." Paul Craig



*Cong. Duncan shown here with Gen. Ray Odionero and others during late January inspection tour of Iraq. The purpose of the trip was to visit with the troops and assess the current situation there.*

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE *continued from page 7*

Roberts, a conservative columnist who was a high-ranking Treasury official under President Reagan, wrote that he hoped we were not entering into a 30-year war in the Middle East: "Otherwise, the combination of war, job and income loss, unprecedented trade deficits, and the creation of Social Security entitlements for foreign nationals will break the U.S. long before another generation passes. Before the U.S. can reconstruct the world, it must cease deconstructing itself."

### ✓ Foreign Policy

In 1998, at a time Iraq was not even in the news, I voted for the Iraq Liberation Act to give \$100 million to the Iraqi opposition to begin efforts to remove Saddam Hussein. He was a very evil leader, but he had a military budget only about 2/10 of one percent of ours. I was told in a meeting with Condoleezza Rice and George Tenet at the White House that 80% of the Iraqi people hated Hussein. If that was true, and I believed it was, then I felt we could have advised, trained, and funded the Iraqi opposition and let them do the fighting rather than have our young soldiers killed or maimed. I opposed the war there for traditional conservative reasons, as did most conservative newspaper columnists and magazines. Most conservatives have always opposed massive foreign aid, huge deficit spending, and placing almost the entire burden of enforcing U.N. resolutions on our taxpayers and our military. Most conservatives have always been against the U.S. being the policeman of the world. Sen. Robert Taft once said: "No

foreign policy can be justified except a policy devoted...to the protection of the liberty of the American people, with war only as the last resort and only to preserve that liberty." Saddam Hussein should have been removed by the Iraqi people themselves without squandering our treasury and having our young people do the fighting and dying. Columnist Georgie Anne Geyer put it best: "Critics of the war against Iraq have said since the beginning of the conflict that Americans, still strangely complacent about overseas wars being waged by a minority in their name, will inevitably come to a point where they will see they have to have a government that provides services at home or one that seeks empire across the globe."

### ✓ Gas Prices

Gas prices have risen to some of their highest levels ever primarily for two reasons: 1) we are being robbed by foreign oil producers, and 2) extreme environmentalists oppose any oil production in the U.S. The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is a 19.8 million acre site, 35 times the size of the Great Smoky Mountains. Yet, some left-wing extremists opposed drilling on just 2,000 acres there (about 1/100 of one percent of the Refuge) in a part that is a frozen tundra with no trees for many, many miles. We have not opened a new oil refinery since 1975, and something like 36 have been forced to close since 1980 due to too many rules and regulations. If we do not produce more U.S. oil, we will become even more vulnerable to foreign nations and damage both our economy and our national security.

## Upcoming Constituent Days

*(First Come, First Served)*

### Monday, April 5<sup>th</sup>

**10:00 a.m.—Blount County**  
MLK Community Center  
209 E. Franklin Street  
Alcoa

### 3:00 p.m.—Loudon County

Loudon County Courthouse Annex  
101 Mulberry Street  
Loudon

### Tuesday, April 6<sup>th</sup>

**10:00 a.m.—Knox County**  
Halls Branch Library  
4815 E. Emory Road  
Knoxville

### Wednesday, April 7<sup>th</sup>

**10:00 a.m.—Sevier County**  
Seymour Volunteer Fire Dept  
101 Ford Hill Lane  
Seymour

### 3:00 p.m.—Knox County

Farragut Town Hall  
11408 Municipal Center Drive  
Knoxville

### Thursday, April 8<sup>th</sup>

**10:00 a.m.—Monroe County**  
Vonore City Hall  
613 Church Street  
Vonore

### 3:00 p.m.—McMinn County

McMinn County Courthouse  
Congressman Duncan's Office  
6 E. Madison Avenue  
Athens

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