



Congressman

Gene Green

Reports

29th Congressional District of Texas

August 2006

Dear Friend,

This newsletter announces our second series of town hall meetings for 2006. You are welcome and encouraged to attend any or all of our meetings. The meetings are scheduled for various times and locations throughout the district for your convenience. Along with these town halls we have also scheduled special meetings including a Senior Citizens' Issues Forum, a Northside Flood Control Meeting, a Paying for College Workshop, as well as our annual Immunization Day, and annual Military Academy Day.

This newsletter discusses a variety of issues, from immigration to solutions for flood control, high energy prices, as well as the air defenses of Houston and port security. There are many issues affecting our nation and our community. I hope you will be able to attend one of our town hall meetings so I can hear your views and concerns.

During our July 4th week I joined three other members of Congress to travel to health care facilities for injured troops at Landstuhl Hospital-Germany, Balad-Iraq, Baghdad-Iraq and Kabul-Afghanistan. At each stop the health care staff showed the outstanding care given to our injured soldiers. We also thanked the troops and health care providers for their service to our country. We want them home safe as soon as possible.

It is an honor to serve you. I look forward to seeing you at our town hall meetings. Feel free to contact me at any of our offices listed below.

Sincerely,

Gene Green
Member of Congress

Town Hall Meetings

August 3, 2006--Thursday @ 6:30PM-7:30PM
Galena Park City Hall, 2000 Clinton Dr. Galena Park

August 5, 2006--Saturday @ 9:00AM-10:00AM
Pasadena Library, 1201 Jeff Ginn Memorial Dr., Pasadena

August 5, 2006--Saturday @ 11:00AM-12:00PM
Lee College, Tucker Auditorium Hall
200 Lee Drive, Baytown

August 8, 2006--Tuesday @6:30PM-7:30PM
In conjunction w/ Eastwood/Lawndale
Wayside Super Neighborhood Council
Villa de Matel, 6510 Lawndale

August 9, 2006--Wednesday @ 10:00AM-11:00AM
Senior Issues Forum
South Houston Community Building
1007 State St., South Houston

August 9, 2006--Wednesday @ 6:30PM-7:30PM
Aldine Branch Library, 11331 Airline Dr.

August 15, 2006--Tuesday @ 7:00PM-8:00PM
In conjunction w/ North Lindale Civic Club
Harris County Education Building
6300 Irvington

August 29, 2006--Tuesday @ 6:30PM-7:30PM
In conjunction w/ Reveille Park Place Civic Club
Park Place Regional Library, 8145 Park Place

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11TH ANNUAL IMMUNIZATION DAY

Sturday, August 12

9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Please join Rep. Green to discuss preventive health initiatives before Congress at any of the locations listed below. Free child immunization shots will be administered:

Northshore Elementary School
14310 Duncannon Dr.
Galena Park ISD

Crespo Elementary School Black Elementary School
7500 Office City Dr. 160 Mill Stream Ln.
Houston ISD Aldine ISD

Federal Health Center Program Extension

On June 21, 2006, the House of Representatives passed legislation sponsored by Congressman Gene Green (D-Texas) and Congressman Nathan Deal (R-Georgia) to re-authorize the federal government's Health Center program through 2011. The Health Center program provides funding to Federally-Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) operating in medically-underserved areas. Three health centers in our district participate in the Health Center program: El Centro de Corazon, in Eastwood, Pasadena Health Center and Denver Harbor's La Rocha Clinic.

FQHCs are a critical part of our country's health care safety net. In 2005, health centers provided care to 6 million uninsured individuals. All FQHCs must meet the four requirements to qualify for federal assistance under the Health Center program. Health centers must be located in medically-underserved areas; they must provide the full range of primary and preventive health care; they may not turn away patients who are unable to pay; and they must be governed by an independent board, which must be majority-governed by members of the community utilizing the center for health care.

Across the nation, health centers have provided a medical home to 15 million Americans. Health centers have proved to be cost-effective in their delivery of health care, as health centers, on average, save state Medicaid programs 30 percent in annual spending.

We are working to expand the number of health centers in our district and are currently putting together the community support and resources necessary to develop clinics in Northside Houston, Southeast Houston and in the Galena Park/Jacinto City area. The reauthorization of this program will help further our efforts to provide quality primary and preventive care to medically-underserved individuals in our community.

LIHEAP/ Energy Prices

In March 2006, Congress approved and the President signed legislation (S. 2320) to provide an extra \$1 billion for the federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), for a total of \$3.1 billion for 2006. Out of the additional \$1 billion, \$39 million will go to help 40,000 more Texas families with their electricity bills. The legislation was especially important for Texas because the funding formula for LIHEAP is biased against Texas unless funding goes above \$2 billion.

To be eligible for LIHEAP assistance, a household must have at least one member age 60 or older and/or a disabled adult, and have income below certain federal poverty guidelines (for example, \$10,200 for a 1 person household or \$25,000 for a family of 4). To determine if you are eligible for assistance, you may call the local operator of the program, Sheltering Arms Senior Services at 713-956-7456, between the hours of 9 AM and noon, on Tuesdays and Thursdays only.

All Texans have the opportunity to shop around for electricity, and some providers are offering lower prices than others. To learn about the providers and prices in your area, you may call the Texas Public Utility Commission toll-free at 1-866-FWR-4-TEX (1-866-797-4839) or visit their website at www.powertochoose.org.

1

Congressman Green, Baytown Mayor Steve Don Carlos, former Mayor Pete Alfaro present a Bronze Star with 3 Oak Clusters to Conrad Garcia, pictured next to his mother, that he earned during his service in Vietnam.

Medicare Part D Update: Open Enrollment Begins November 15

Medicare beneficiaries who did not enroll in the prescription drug benefit can enroll in a drug plan during the open enrollment period, which begins November 15, 2006 and ends December 15, 2006. Beneficiaries who would like to switch prescription drug plans may also do so during the open enrollment period.

Medicare beneficiaries who did not enroll in a prescription drug plan by May 15 and who are ineligible for the low-income subsidy will typically face penalties if they enroll at a later date. For each month after May 15 that beneficiaries wait to enroll, their monthly premiums will increase by one percent - a penalty that will apply for the length of their enrollment in the Medicare prescription drug benefit. These penalties do not apply if a beneficiary has recently become eligible for Medicare or if a beneficiary previously had prescription drug coverage as part of a retiree health plan.

These penalties are overly burdensome considering that Medicare beneficiaries have many factors to consider when deciding among the 68 plans available in Harris County. Congressman Green has supported legislative efforts to extend the open enrollment period through December 31, 2006 and allow Medicare beneficiaries to switch plans once during 2006, without delay. Congressman Green also supported legislation that would allow the Medicare program to negotiate with pharmaceutical companies for lower drug costs.

PAYING FOR COLLEGE WORKSHOP

Attention Parents & High School Students

Please join me and a special guest from the Sallie Mae Fund for an information workshop on paying for college. Your child's education is important and we want to make sure you have access to information regarding financial aid and scholarships.

Monday, October 16

7:00 p.m. -8:30 p.m.

MacArthur High School

4400 Aldine Mail Route

Senior Issues Forum

Congressman Green will be hosting a forum at South Houston Community Building to discuss social security, prescription drug coverage, medicare plus choice plans and other medicare reforms. All seniors are invited to attend. Representatives from Social Security Administration will be present.

Wednesday, August 9
10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

South Houston Community Bldg.
1007 State Street, South Houston

Port of Houston Security

In April 2006, Congressman Gene Green asked the Port Strategic Security Council to convene at the Port of Houston to discuss the recent \$31 million port security grants awarded to the Port of Houston Authority and Harris County. The Port Strategic Security Council is a new organization formed to pursue funding and technology to protect the Houston Ship Channel and it is made up of local, state, and federal government along with area manufacturing and shipping industry representatives.

The Port of Houston and Harris County received their record-breaking \$31 million grant in July 2005, after the top port security grant official for the Department of Homeland Security visited the Port of Houston at Congressman Green's 2005 Port Security Roundtable. The new funding will cover security boats, radars, cameras, underwater sonar, a bomb disruption robot, radiation detectors, card readers, cameras, gates, lights, security stations, and video software.

This year's meeting involved both federal and local governments, along with the East Harris County Manufacturers Association which represents industrial facilities along the Houston Ship Channel. The project is entering the detailed engineering phase, and the new security assets should start to be deployed along the Houston Ship Channel in 2007.

2

Congressman Gene Green receives a Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan certificate and an American flag from Major Flores M.D. during his 4th of July tour of health facilities in Germany, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Ellington Field Update:

To maintain air security over Houston and the surrounding area, the Air Force plans to rotate fighter planes to Ellington so that aircraft will be stationed there that can react to a security threat within minutes. The Air Force has announced it will move 12 RQ-1 Predator Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) to Ellington, and the 147th combat support arm will remain intact.

The Texas Air National Guard has also proposed acquiring 11 C-26 aircraft from the Army National Guard who will be divesting themselves of the aircraft soon. These aircraft, once modified, would provide real-time intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and direct communication to law enforcement, the Department of Homeland Security, Secret Service, Customs, Border Patrol, FEMA, and countless other agencies. While the loss of the 147th Fighter Wing's F-16s was disappointing, the addition of the UAVs and possibly the C-26 ensure Ellington Field will continue to play an important role in protecting Houston and protecting our country.

Hurricane Preparedness

Last year, two hurricanes had severe impacts on the Gulf Coast—Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita. The evacuation from Hurricane Rita was the largest evacuation in American history, and many Harris County residents suffered for many hours in their cars along the evacuation routes with low fuel supplies.

In response, local and state officials are working to improve our evacuation process, and Congressman Green has passed two amendments in Congress to improve our hurricane evacuations. As a result of these amendments to H.R. 3893 and H.R. 5611, the Department of Energy would be required to review and approve the fuel supply plans for evacuations and convene a government-industry partnership to develop solutions to supply fuel during evacuations. Harris County evacuation maps are posted online at http://www.hcoem.org/evac_route.php or you can request one by calling one of our offices or Harris County Emergency Management at 713-881-3100.

To prepare for hurricane season, the Federal Emergency Management Agency recommends that each family have: water (1 gallon daily per person for 3 to 7 days), food (also for 3 to 7 days), non-electric can opener, utensils, blankets/pillows, clothing (rain gear, sturdy shoes), medical supplies (first aid and medicines), special items for infants and the elderly, toiletries, flashlight (with extra batteries), battery radio, cash, important documents in a waterproof container (insurance, medical records, bank account numbers, social security card), keys, toys, books and games, tools, vehicle fuel tanks filled, and pet care items.

Federal Flood Control Projects

To prevent flooding, Congressman Green is pursuing more federal funding for Harris County flood control projects. For 2007, the request is \$2 million for Greens Bayou and \$100,000 each for federal work on Hunting Bayou and Halls Bayou. The Harris County Flood Control District is also responsible for local work on these bayous and most large drainage channels. It is important to build these projects as soon as possible since tens of thousands of homes flooded in these areas during Tropical Storm Allison in 2001 and dozens more flooded in June 2006.

The funding for Greens Bayou would start new construction on the federal portion of the project, and construction on the Hunting Bayou project has already begun. The Halls Bayou project is also included in legislation, H.R. 2864, that would allow the Harris County Flood Control District to begin construction and secure federal approval and funding afterwards to prevent bureaucratic delays.

Attention High School Students

Students interested in applying to any of the U.S. Service Academies should plan to attend the Annual Academy Day. Academy representatives will be available to answer questions, and provide informational materials about the academies and the application process.

U.S. Service Academy Day
Saturday, September 23
9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

Houston Community College, Southeast Campus
Angela Morales Building, Lecture Hall
6815 Rustic and Gulf Freeway

Flood Control Meeting

Join Congressman Gene Green to discuss the latest updates in flood control projects on the Northside.

Northside Flood Control Meeting
Monday, August 7
7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Little York Baptist Church
609 Little York Rd.
Houston, TX 77076

Immigration

On December 16, 2005, the U.S. House of Representatives passed HR 4437 by Congressman James Sensenbrenner (R-WI) with a vote of 239 to 182. On May 25, 2006, the U.S. Senate passed S. 2611 by a vote of 62 to 36. While both of these bills seek to resolve the immigration issue in our country, these bills are very different.

HR 4437 focuses on enforcement while the bill approved by the Senate focuses on enforcement and creates a system which would classify all illegal immigrants already in the country and grant some an opportunity to earn their legal residency, and eventually their citizenship.

Because these bills have many differences, House and Senate leadership will appoint a Conference Committee to work out the differences in these two bills. If a compromise is reached, one bill containing that compromise language will be voted on by the Senate and U.S. House of Representatives and if it passes, sent to the President. At this time, there is no indication when House and Senate leadership will convene the Conference Committee to address immigration issues.

Congress should strengthen security along our border. Every nation should be able to control its borders and know who is entering their country. Our economy is not strong, and we do not need a guest worker program. We do need to address the 10-12 million people who are here and are not legal immigrants. Someone who immigrates illegally has broken the law and there should be a penalty for anyone who has broken our laws.

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Official Business

M.C.
Presorted Standard
W/S Carrier Route

Si le gustaría recibir una copia de este noticiero en español, hágame el favor de escribirme a 256 N. Sam Houston Pkwy. E, Ste. 29, Houston, TX 77060. Si es más fácil, también puede llamar a nuestra oficina para recibir el noticiero.