



▲ Rep. Levin speaks with students about legislative issues.

Representing the 12th Congressional District of Michigan

The Congressional Connector

Week of April 7 - 11, 2008

80,000 Jobs Lost in March

On April 4, the Department of Labor reported that U.S. employers cut 80,000 jobs in March after having slashed 152,000 jobs in January and February. Responding to the weak jobs report, Rep. Levin urged swift action to extend unemployment benefits: "In the past, extensions of unemployment benefits have come too late. We simply cannot afford to wait any longer while the nation's economic condition worsens and more jobs are lost."

For more information, [click here](#).

Economists note that extending unemployment benefits to people hurt by the weakening economy is one of the fastest acting and most effective forms of stimulus for the U.S. economy.

Bush Administration Submits Controversial Trade Pact to Congress

On April 7, the Bush Administration announced that it will force a vote on the U.S.-Colombia free trade agreement over the opposition of House Democratic leaders. There is widespread concern in Congress about the level of violence in Colombia, the impunity, the lack of investigations and prosecutions of the violence against workers, the role of the paramilitary and inadequate labor laws. The overall climate suppresses the rights of workers and cannot be resolved through language in a trade agreement. Rep. Levin does not support the Colombia FTA and has repeatedly said there must first be concrete evidence of sustained results on the ground in Colombia.

Rep. Levin and Rep. McCreary of Louisiana debated the proposed Colombia trade agreement on the News Hour with Jim Lehrer on April 7.

To view the transcript or watch the debate, [click here to visit the News Hour website](#).

House Votes to Expand U.S. Effort to Combat Global HIV/AIDS, TB, and Malaria

On April 2, the House voted 308 to 116 to expand a key initiative to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria around the globe. The bipartisan bill [H.R. 5501] calls for \$50 billion over the next five years to fight these deadly diseases. The bill's goals include: by 2013, preventing 12 million new HIV infections; providing antiretroviral treatment for 3 million people; providing medical and nonmedical care for 12 million people (including 5 million orphans); and training 140,000 new health care workers.

For more information, [click here](#).

The Week Ahead

On Tuesday, the House is expected to debate a resolution [H.Res. 1077] calling on the Government of China to end its crackdown in Tibet. Later in the week, the House is also expected to consider the National Landscape Conservation System Act [H.R. 2016] and the Beach Protection Act [H.R. 2537].