



# Todd Platts

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**Congressional Update**

**Don't miss the Town Meeting schedule below!**

**Fall 2005**

*This mailing was prepared, published and mailed at taxpayer expense.*



Dear Friend,

I hope this letter finds you doing well. I am pleased to update you on the actions of Congress on various major policy issues, including actions related to Hurricane Katrina. I also want to inform you of my next series of town hall meetings. A listing of the dates, times, and locations of these meetings is found below. Please plan to attend the meeting most convenient to you. Feedback from citizens is always welcomed and very helpful to me.

Given the increasing risk and seriousness of identity theft, I want to highlight the article about this issue found inside this newsletter. As the article details, I will be hosting an identity theft seminar, featuring officials from various agencies, on October 20.

With many 19th District residents serving our nation in harm's way far from home and numerous others having made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our nation, I hope you will continue to keep these courageous individuals and their families in your thoughts and prayers. But for the unwavering service of these true American heroes and those who served before them, we would not be blessed with the unparalleled freedoms and liberties that we enjoy everyday. May God watch over them and may God continue to bless the United States of America!

Sincerely,

Todd Russell Platts

**Well-Deserved Recognition** - *It is deeply rewarding to assist some of the brave men and women who have worn our Nation's uniform in receiving the recognition they have earned. I was honored to join Command Sergeant Major Franklin Saunders and Colonel Craig Madden as they awarded the American Campaign Medal and a Bronze Star for Valor to Charles Koons of Red Lion (accompanied by his wife Ruth) for his courageous service to our country in World War II.*



## Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage Set to Begin

Beginning November 15, 2005, Medicare beneficiaries will be able to sign up for optional prescription drug coverage known as "Medicare Part D." Congress enacted this new benefit in order to offer all Medicare beneficiaries the **voluntary** opportunity to purchase private health insurance coverage for their prescription drug costs at a subsidized rate.

This new benefit will become effective January 1, 2006 for those beneficiaries who enroll prior to the end of 2005. To avoid a late enrollment penalty, current Medicare beneficiaries must enroll prior to May 15, 2006. The exact nature and structure of benefits under Part D will vary from plan-to-plan, but a standard benefit will have a \$250 deductible, offer limited coverage until out-of-pocket costs reach \$3,600 per year, and then provide catastrophic coverage equal to 95% of drug costs for the remainder of the year. Premiums will also vary from plan-to-plan, but are expected to average \$33 per month in Pennsylvania for the 2006 benefit year.

Medicare beneficiaries who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or full Medicaid benefits will automatically qualify for help beyond the standard benefit under Part D. This extra help includes more comprehensive coverage of prescription drug costs and no or reduced premiums. Other seniors with incomes below 150% of the poverty line (\$1,197 per month for a single person and \$1,604 per month for a couple) may qualify for extra help as well. Such seniors, however, must fill out an application for the extra assistance. This summer the Social Security Administration (SSA) mailed applications out to senior citizens that may qualify. If you did not receive an application and believe you may qualify for extra help, visit the SSA's web site at <http://www.ssa.gov/prescriptionhelp/> or call 1-800-772-1213.

If you are currently enrolled in the state-run PACE or PACE-NET program, you may still want to apply for the extra assistance offered under Medicare Part D. Importantly, Medicare Part D was designed to coordinate with state-run programs like PACE and PACE-NET. Details on this coordination are still being worked out with the state.

Medicare beneficiaries will receive information on their exact drug plan options in October. In the meantime, if you have any questions regarding Medicare prescription drug coverage, please call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) or visit Medicare's web site at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov). Assistance is also available at 1-800-783-7067 from APPRISE, the state's health insurance counseling program for Medicare beneficiaries and through my offices.

## Town Meeting Schedule

**Tuesday, October 11**

**Susan Byrnes Health Center Auditorium**  
515 South George Street  
York  
9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

**Tuesday, October 11**

**Biglerville Fire Company**  
111 South Main Street  
Biglerville  
7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

**Wednesday, October 12**

**Fairview Township Municipal Building**  
599 Lewisberry Road  
New Cumberland  
7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

**Thursday, October 13**

**Cumberland County Old Court House**  
1 Courthouse Square  
Carlisle  
7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

# Hurricane Katrina Recovery Continues

## Congressional Panel to Investigate Emergency Preparedness and Response

The scenes of devastation and despair caused by Hurricane Katrina are heart-wrenching and unprecedented in our nation's history. All individuals who have been impacted by Hurricane Katrina, especially those who have lost loved ones in this horrific tragedy, remain in our thoughts and prayers.

We also want to remember the military and emergency services personnel who have worked tirelessly in very dire conditions to save lives and maintain order. Their heroic efforts, matched with the outpouring of support from the American people, are a testament to our nation's character and compassion.

Shortly after Hurricane Katrina struck, the United States Congress held a special emergency session to pass legislation (H.R. 3645) providing \$10.5 billion for the continuation of rescue and recovery efforts in the 90,000 square mile disaster area. Subsequently, additional legislation (H.R. 3673) was passed by Con-

gress in support of the relief and recovery efforts. A summary of these bills can be found on the House Appropriations Committee website at <http://appropriations.house.gov>.

Additionally, a joint House-Senate committee has been appointed to investigate the advance preparation for and emergency response to Hurricane Katrina. It is critically important that the actions of federal, state, and local officials be closely reviewed and understood to determine what went right and especially what went wrong. Such a thorough and deliberate review is essential to better preparing our nation for possible future disasters, whether terrorist-related or natural.

While the months ahead will be long and difficult, our nation will continue to meet this unprecedented challenge with unwavering determination, compassion, and courage. For more information, please visit the USA Freedom Corps website at <http://www.usafreedomcorps.gov/>.



*Arts Competition Winner - Each year, the Congressional High School Art Competition recognizes the artistic talents of young citizens. The 19th District's 2005 winning entry was "Shadow," a charcoal painting by Ashley Beans, a then senior at Hanover High School. Ashley's mother, Laura Beans, joined her in Washington for the recognition event. Information regarding the 2006 Competition can be found on my website at [www.house.gov/platts](http://www.house.gov/platts).*

*New Visitor Center in Gettysburg - I was privileged to join Senator Rick Santorum, Gettysburg National Battlefield Museum Foundation President Bob Wilburn, Foundation Board Chairman Robert Kinsley and National Park Service officials at the groundbreaking ceremony for the new visitor center at Gettysburg National Military Park. The new center will give visitors a better understanding of the battle of Gettysburg and how it shaped our national character.*



## House Passes Trade Enforcement Legislation and CAFTA Seeks to Crack Down on Unfair Trade Practices by China and Open New Markets

To ensure long-term economic vitality in our nation, American trade policy should ensure American producers have the tools they need to combat the unfair trade practices of other nations and enhance access to foreign markets for American products. The United States House of Representatives passed two bills on July 27, 2005 addressing these trade priorities.

First, the House passed the United States Trade Enforcement Act (H.R. 3283) by a vote of 240 to 186. This important legislation closes a loophole in current trade law by allowing countervailing duties to be imposed on so-called "non-market economies," most notably China, when said countries provide export subsidies to their manufacturers in violation of international trade agreements. Such countervailing duties can already be imposed on governments with market-based economies, but cannot be imposed on China. This double-standard is completely unacceptable and economically damaging to American manufacturers that play by the rules. As such, I voted in favor of H.R. 3283. This much-needed legislation is now pending in the United States Senate.

With respect to increasing access to foreign markets, the House passed the Dominican Republic-Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). Currently, most imports from the Dominican Republic and Central American countries enter the United States duty-free, which means that employment in the United States is less likely to be significantly impacted by CAFTA. However, substantial barriers are currently in place for American exports to these countries. CAFTA will remove these barriers for American exports of manufactured goods.

American farmers will also receive a boost with the elimination of steep tariffs on many farm exports. Finally, fines can be imposed on CAFTA countries which do not enforce core labor standards, and benchmarks will be set for the improvement of the environment in the region.

It should also be noted that, in addition to enhancing export opportunities for American companies, CAFTA will help to strengthen our ties with American allies in the region. These allies, such as El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, are new democracies, born out of bloody civil wars in the region in the 1980s. In light of the efforts of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and Cuban President Fidel Castro to destabilize these democracies, it is clearly in the national security interests of the United States to engage in commerce with the people of these countries, reinforcing the growth of democracy in Latin America.

The House passed CAFTA by a vote of 217 to 215 and the Senate passed it by a vote of 55 to 45. I joined the bi-partisan majority of my colleagues in voting in favor of its passage. In my many conversations with local employers and workers, I have found that Chinese trade practices are viewed as perhaps the most significant cause of trade-related job losses within manufacturing. Central America and the Dominican Republic—with a combined economy that is less than 1% the size of our economy—are viewed as having either a negligible impact on business or as presenting an opportunity to export more of our products. The passage of both H.R. 3283 and CAFTA correctly recognizes these economic factors.

## Anti-Terrorism Law on Path to Likely Reauthorization

Provisions of the Patriot Act, an anti-terrorism law enacted in October 2001, are scheduled to expire at the end of this year if not reauthorized by the full Congress prior to then. On July 21, 2005, the House of Representatives voted 257 to 171 to reauthorize this important law, with some slight modifications intended to address civil liberties concerns. The Senate unanimously passed similar legislation on July 29, 2005.

I voted in favor of reauthorizing the Patriot Act because I believe that, among the steps Congress has taken to implement the lessons learned from the tragic attacks of September 11th, the enactment of the Patriot Act was one of the most important. A central focus of the Patriot Act was to eliminate the “wall” which had been erected to stop intelligence and law enforcement officials from talking to each other about terrorism cases. The Patriot Act’s other provisions do not provide new and unprecedented powers to intelligence and law enforcement officials. Rather, these provisions simply allow officials to begin using the same tools long available to them in cases related to organized crime, child pornography, and drug investigations when they conduct international terrorism investigations.

Unfortunately, there are many exaggerations and distortions surrounding the Patriot Act. Of all the aspects of the Patriot Act, perhaps the most sensationalized is Section 215, which opponents frequently mischaracterize as “the library records provision.” In fact, the act does not mention library records at all. Rather, the Patriot Act amended the procedures and jurisdiction of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court (FISC), which was authorized in 1978 under President Jimmy Carter to oversee the use of surveillance and the subpoenaing of business records in foreign intelligence cases.

Originally, a FISC judge could subpoena records only from specified businesses (e.g., airlines and hotels). The Patriot Act broadened the authority of FISC judges to order the production of any “relevant” business records. Section 215 could thus hypothetically be used to subpoena library records, although the Department of Justice has repeatedly stated that the provision has in fact never been used for library records.

Importantly, there are several protections against “fishing expeditions” under the FISC procedures. First, Section 215 can only be used “to obtain foreign intelligence information not concerning a United States person” or “to protect against international terrorism or clandestine intelligence activities.” Section 215 cannot be used to investigate ordinary crimes or even domestic terrorism. Second, in order to secure a court order for the production of business records under Section 215, the government must demonstrate to a FISC judge that the information in question is relevant to an investigation pertaining to international terrorism or clandestine intelligence activities. This is the same standard of relevancy used to subpoena records in grand jury investigations. Third, the government must demonstrate that its investigation is not based solely on the exercise of the First Amendment rights of a U.S. citizen. Finally, all requests for FISC subpoenas must be reported to the Congressional intelligence committees, which consist of both Republican and Democrat members and their staffs.

A second controversial provision in the Patriot Act is Section 213, which allows for delayed notification of search warrants. Referred to derisively as “sneak-and-peak searches,” this provision has been incorrectly portrayed as allowing federal agents to search people’s homes without providing any notice. In reality, Section 213 simply created a nationwide standard for when law enforcement may - pursuant to a court order - conduct a search but not serve notice of the search until a later time. Specifically, notification of a search under the Patriot Act can be temporarily delayed only when a court determines it is necessary to avoid the intimidation of witnesses, the destruction of evidence, flight from prosecution, physical injury, or death.

Delayed notification search warrants are a long-existing, crime fighting tool upheld by courts nationwide for decades. Prior to the passage of the Patriot Act, courts across the nation used differing standards for delayed notification. This lack of uniformity hindered complex terrorism cases. The enactment of Section 213 of the Patriot Act simply resolved this problem by establishing a uniform statutory standard.

Multiple hearings have been held by both House and Senate committees to address civil liberties concerns. Although no abuses under the law have been documented, H.R. 3199 would adjust several provisions of the original Act in order to create additional layers of protection against hypothetical abuses. For example, H.R. 3199 would: create a clearer process for the challenging of subpoenas issued under the Patriot Act; clarify that the recipient of a subpoena has the right to consult with an attorney; require the FBI Director to personally sign-off on any requests for library records; and, limit delayed notification searches to 180 days, with the possibility of 90 day extensions. Importantly, these adjustments would not create loopholes for terrorists or otherwise sacrifice the ability of investigators to conduct their critically important anti-terrorism work.

Differences between the House and Senate versions of H.R. 3199 must now be resolved by a House-Senate conference committee. Hopefully, the conference committee and then the full Congress will successfully reauthorize the Patriot Act to provide effective law enforcement tools and adequately safeguard civil liberties.



*Hands-on Experience* - Through the 19th District Internship Association’s annual program, six local college students worked 10 weeks in my district and Washington offices this summer to learn about Congress and to serve 19th District residents. Pictured from the left are: *Brianna Linehan*, a junior at Albright College, and daughter of Peter and Sheri Linehan of Shippensburg; *William Alleman, Jr.*, a senior at Dickinson College, and son of William and Judy Alleman of York; *Emily Miller*, a sophomore at George Mason University, and daughter of DeWolfe and Charlotte Miller of York; *Thomas Kramer*, a senior at Gettysburg College, and son of William and Jackie Kramer of York; *Melissa Colpo*, a senior at Penn State, and daughter of Michael and Vera Colpo of Carlisle; and *Jarrod Baker*, a senior at the University of Pittsburgh, and son of Timothy and Nedra Baker of York.

*Young People Making a Difference* - One of the most rewarding duties associated with my official position is the presentation of Certificates of Special Congressional Recognition to Boy Scouts on the occasion of their achieving the rank of Eagle and Girl Scouts when they receive their Gold Award. One of the most recent Eagle Scouts I recognized

was Troop 58 Scout *Daniel Grimme* of Camp Hill, pictured here with Scoutmaster *Thomas Devlin* and his parents, *Gerald* and *Mary Grimme*.



# Border Security, Illegal Immigration a Growing Crisis

In August of this year, the governors of New Mexico and Arizona declared states of emergency in order to free up funds for greater law enforcement efforts along their states' borders with Mexico. In their declarations, the governors cited a series of ongoing problems along their borders related to human smuggling, the drug trade, the destruction of private property, and violent crime. The actions of the New Mexico and Arizona governors reinforce the critical need for the federal government to be more aggressive in securing our nation's borders.

On May 11, 2005, President George W. Bush signed into law a measure (H.R. 1268) containing the provisions of the REAL ID Act. This common-sense legislation will help expedite the construction of security fences along our borders, bans states from issuing drivers licenses to illegal immigrants, makes it more difficult for the asylum process to be abused, and makes it easier to deport aliens with ties to terrorist groups. More recently, both the United States House of Representatives and Senate have passed Homeland Security appropriations bills which would provide funding sufficient to increase the number of border patrol agents by 1,500.

I believe that even more needs to be done. I am the co-sponsor of legislation (H.R. 688) to increase the screening and tracking of aliens, require aliens to use secure identification documents, expedite proceedings for the removal of terrorists and criminal aliens, and strictly limit the granting of visas to individuals from states known to sponsor terrorists. I am also the co-sponsor of legislation (H.R. 3137) to provide full authorization and new federal resources to state and local law enforcement agencies that assist federal authorities in enforcing our nation's immigration laws.

Border security is an issue of great importance. Porous borders and under-enforced immigration laws encourage lawlessness. Moreover, given the on-going threat of additional terrorist attacks here at home, an enforceable border is an issue directly related to our national security. State and local governments should not be left to handle the growing problems associated with porous borders and illegal immigration on their own. Rather, federal, state, and local governments must work hand-in-hand with each other to meet this serious problem for the good of all Americans.

*Protecting Those That Defend America - I was honored to meet the fire and emergency services personnel stationed at the Naval Supply Systems Command in Mechanicsburg regarding efforts to enhance their emergency response capabilities. These dedicated first responders exemplify the heroic service of countless men and women in uniform throughout our community, state, and nation.*



*Meeting with Students - As a member of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, it is helpful for me to regularly visit with students and teachers in their classrooms. I recently met with parents and students participating in the Even Start program in the York City School District. Even Start is a wonderful program designed to break the cycle of poverty and improve the literacy of families through a unified program of family literacy services.*

## House Passes Stem Cell Bills

The United States House of Representatives passed two bills related to stem cell research on May 24, 2005. The first bill (H.R. 2520) would create a new federal program to collect and store umbilical-cord-blood stem cells. The second bill (H.R. 810) would authorize federal funding for embryonic stem cell research when the three specific conditions delineated below are satisfied.

First, under H.R. 810, the stem cell line at issue must be derived from an embryo originally created for the purposes of fertility treatment, not "cloned" or otherwise created for the purposes of experimentation. These embryos are no more than 5-10 days old and consist of no more than 40-150 undifferentiated cells. Second, the individuals seeking fertility treatment must affirm that the embryos at issue are in excess of their clinical needs and that they would otherwise choose to have the embryos destroyed. Third, the individuals donating an embryo must provide written informed consent and are prohibited from receiving any financial or other inducements for the donation.

As a pro-life member of Congress, I have long struggled over the issue of federally-funded embryonic stem cell research. As part of my deliberations over the past several years, I have sought out expert opinions on all sides of the issue and have met with both opponents and proponents of federal funding. I have carefully weighed the philosophical, ethical, and scientific arguments. Ultimately, I have come to view embryonic stem cell research - strictly regulated in the above manner - as

ethically acceptable and imperative for the well-being of millions of disease-afflicted Americans. Importantly, there is limited debate over the moral or ethical status of in vitro fertilization. Yet it results in the creation of multiple embryos, which are frozen and eventually destroyed if not used by the individuals seeking fertility treatment or adopted.

Although H.R. 810 and H.R. 2520 will both help to advance stem cell research, many leading medical and science experts contend that embryonic stem cells - due to their genetic diversity and unique ability to evolve into any cell type - have the greatest long-term potential for successfully treating a wider range of diseases. While stopping embryonic stem cell research does not guarantee that one more baby will be born since the embryos in question will otherwise be destroyed, the denial of federal funds for this promising area of research will likely slow or halt medical breakthroughs for countless individuals of all ages who are suffering from spinal cord injuries and disorders such as juvenile diabetes, Parkinson's, and heart disease.

Under the above-described circumstances, I believe the course of action which will best promote and enhance life is the limited approach of H.R. 810, in conjunction with H.R. 2520's umbilical-cord-blood program. I thus voted in favor of both pieces of legislation when they came before the House of Representatives for consideration. H.R. 810 and H.R. 2520 passed the House by bipartisan votes of 238-194 and 431-1 respectively. Similar legislation is likely to be considered in the Senate in the near future.

## House Pushes for Reform of the United Nations

On June 17, 2005, the full United States House of Representative approved by a vote of 221 to 184 legislation (H.R. 2745) aimed at encouraging the United Nations to reform many of its practices and policies. For example, H.R. 2745 would withhold a portion of dues to the United Nations unless it improved its budget controls, established a code of ethics for its employees and an office to oversee these new ethical standards, and excluded serial human rights abusers from serving on the U.N. Human Rights Commission. I voted in favor of this legislation.

Reform of the United Nations is imperative for the organization to maintain any credibility in world affairs. Recently, the U.N. has been plagued by a series of scandals, from corruption in the U.N. administered Oil-for-Food program to allegations of rape by U.N. peacekeepers and sexual harassment by U.N. executives. In addition, the U.N. has allowed countries with horrific human rights records such as Syria and Sudan to serve on the U.N. Human Rights Commission even as the organization has failed to stop genocide in places like Bosnia and Rwanda. A previous 1985 law withholding dues from the U.N. was highly effective in achieving positive reforms within the organization. H.R. 2745 is now pending in the Senate.

## Seeking to Rein In High Gas Prices

An understandable and rightful concern of many constituents is the extremely high price of gasoline. On a percentage basis, most Americans are finding that their incomes are not keeping up with the increase in the cost of gas. Every time we fill up our cars we are reminded of the importance of this issue.

A worldwide surge in the demand for oil, driven especially by China and India's significant increased consumption, has been dramatically increasing the price at the pump. These price jumps were further exacerbated by Hurricane Katrina, which disrupted domestic supply and shut down or limited operation of numerous refineries. To help address the crisis, the federal government took certain immediate actions. These actions included the release of oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, which was established to provide additional oil in emergency situations such as those caused by Hurricane Katrina, and a waiver of fuel-additive requirements that interfere with gasoline distribution.

The federal government must also adopt long-term policies aimed at bringing gas prices down through increased supply and decreased demand. We must promote conservation, enhance the use of renewable and alternative fuels, and further develop our nation's oil, natural gas, and coal resources in an environmentally responsible manner. This is a far preferable approach than the failed government policies of the 1970's that led to gas lines and rationing.

President George W. Bush signed an energy bill (H.R. 6) into law on August 8, 2005. This legislation included incentives for renewable energy production, greater energy efficiency, the purchase of alternative and hybrid cars, and investments in energy infrastructure. More can and must be done to rein in spiraling upward gas prices. For example, I strongly backed an amendment to the energy bill which would have increased overall fuel efficiency standards for cars and light trucks from an average of 25 miles per gallon to an average of 33 miles per gallon, thereby decreasing America's total gasoline consumption by 10%.

Unfortunately, this amendment failed by a vote of 177 to 254. It is my sincere hope that Congress will re-visit this issue in the near future, especially in light of recent developments.

The United States must also work to increase its refinery capacity. No new oil refineries have been built in the United States since 1976. Today, about 150 refineries operate in the U.S., compared with over 300 in 1981. The aforementioned energy bill will allow the U.S. Department of Energy to begin entering into agreements with local governments in order to expedite the approval process for new refineries. A stronger provision related to refinery permitting was passed by the House of Representatives, but subsequently rejected by a joint House-Senate conference committee. This issue must be re-examined as well.

Finally, I believe that—with proper safeguards in place—energy exploration on a limited portion of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) can help to meet the energy and national security needs of our nation without negatively impacting the beauty or wildlife of Alaska. In fact, the experience in nearby Prudhoe Bay, which I personally toured along with the ANWR region, has proven that modern technology allows for responsible oil production without harming fish, birds, caribou or other wildlife. Under legislation I have supported in the past, energy exploration would be permitted on only 2,000 acres, or about one one-hundredth of one percent of ANWR's 19.6 million acres, and no oil recovered could be exported to other countries.

As we work to address these long-term issues, illegal price-fixing and the intentional gouging of consumers by gasoline companies cannot be tolerated. To report cases of alleged price-fixing or gasoline price gouging, or for more information about gas prices, you may want visit the Department of Energy's web site at <http://gaswatch.energy.gov>. You may also call 1-800-244-3301. Information submitted to the Department is, where appropriate, referred to the U.S. Federal Trade Commission or the state Attorney General for further action.

## Preventing Identity Theft - October 20 Seminar Scheduled

With each transaction you make during the course of an average day, whether it be writing a check at the grocery store, mailing your tax returns or charging a furniture purchase, you reveal personal information such as your name and address, credit card and bank account numbers, or your social security number – a wealth of information for an identity thief.

More than 10 million Americans have been victimized by identity theft, a serious crime that occurs when someone uses personal information without your permission to commit fraud or other crimes. People whose identities have been stolen can spend months or years - and their hard-earned money - cleaning up the mess thieves have made of their good name and credit record.

In response to the growing problem of identity theft, I am hosting an identity theft seminar on Thursday, October 20 from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Manchester Township Building at 3200 Farmtrail Road, York (located 0.7 miles west of I-83, exit 24). This seminar will feature officials from various agencies, including the United States Postal Service, the Pennsylvania State Police, and the Pennsylvania Attorney General's office.

For additional information regarding identity theft, you may want to visit [www.consumer.gov/idtheft](http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft), a web site maintained by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) for consumers regarding all forms of identity and credit fraud. Victims of identity theft can also call the FTC's Identity Theft hotline at 1-877-IDTHEFT (438-4338).

## Transportation Bill Addresses Safety and Congestion Needs

On August 10, President George W. Bush signed into law a measure (H.R. 3) reauthorizing federal highway and transit programs for six years. The previous legislation expired in September 2003 and had been temporarily extended while Congress and the White House worked on a compromise agreement for the next six years. Nearly \$40 million was included in H.R. 3 to address critical transportation infrastructure needs throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. This amount is more than double the funding level allocated to the 19<sup>th</sup> District in the 1997 highway and transit bill. When I was first sworn in to represent the 19<sup>th</sup> District in January 2001,

I secured a position on the House Transportation Committee in order to advance the transportation related needs of Adams, Cumberland, and York counties. During the intervening four and one half years, I have worked with state and local officials in each county to achieve consensus on how best to allocate much needed transportation funds. The nearly \$40 million in 19<sup>th</sup> District funding was distributed equitably between Adams, Cumberland, and York counties based on each county's population in comparison to the district's total population. The local projects funded in H.R. 3 are listed below, by county.

### Adams County

- U.S. Routes 15 and 30 Interchange - Design, construct and upgrade interchange (\$3.2 million)
- PA Route 94 North – Widen from the Adams/York County line north to Appler Road (\$1.5 million)
- Gettysburg Transit System – Design and construct transit transfer center in Gettysburg (\$751,564)
- East/West Traffic Study – Address congestion issues along Adams County's east/west corridors (\$500,000)

### Cumberland County

- Mechanicsburg Borough – Replace traffic signals and optimize signal timing devices (\$360,000)
- New Kingston Bypass – Design and construct the relocation of U.S. Route 11 northbound (\$5.29 million)
- PA Routes 34/174 Intersection – Design and construct turn lanes and related improvements (\$464,000)
- I-81, Exit 44 – Design and construct improvements to the I-81/Route 465 interchange (\$3.1 million)
- Shippensburg Loop – Design and construct inner loop roadway around Shippensburg (\$400,000)
- Wormleysburg Borough – Design and construct Stella Street railroad crossing improvements (\$600,000)
- Shippensburg University - Campus circulation improvements – (\$250,00)

### York County

- I-83, Exit 18 – Design and construct interchange and related improvements (\$4.8 million)
- I-83, Exit 19 – Design and construct interchange and related improvements (\$5.8 million)
- I-83, Exit 4 – Design and construct interchange and related improvements (\$2.8 million)
- PA Route 94 North – Widen from the Adams/York County line south to Elm Street (\$2.4 million)
- Rabbit Transit – Construct and upgrade transit hubs and install communications equipment (\$2.3 million)
- PA Routes 24 & 124 – Design and construct intersection upgrades (\$800,000)
- Lower Windsor Township – Construct the realignment of Cool Creek Road (\$800,000)
- Intermodal Facility – Design and construct access to intermodal rail facility in York County (\$1.6 million)
- City of York – Improvements related to the Northwest Triangle Project (\$1.2 million)
- Springettsbury Township – Completion of Concord Road Extension and related improvements (\$500,000)

## Subcommittee Promotes Accountability in Government

For the past three years, I have chaired the House of Representatives Government Reform Subcommittee on Government Management, Finance, and Accountability. Working closely with the Government Accountability Office, the investigative arm of Congress, the Subcommittee plays a critical oversight role in seeking to ensure that taxpayer funds are spent in an effective and responsible manner. Highlighted below are examples of the Subcommittee's work.

### Greater Scrutiny for DHS

Investigative reports have revealed serious accounting problems at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), including mismanagement of large contracts at the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), fraudulent payments related to FEMA's disaster relief efforts following last year's hurricanes in Florida, and unanticipated budget shortfalls at the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). In light of our nation's border security challenges and the on-going disaster recovery efforts related to Hurricane Katrina, the problems at ICE and FEMA are particularly troubling. In response to ICE's budget shortfall, a hiring freeze was instituted and, for a period of time, ICE agents did not have enough money for fill their cars with gas, pay confidential informants, or use their cell phones.

Financial mismanagement such as that identified at TSA, FEMA, and ICE exemplifies the reason I sponsored the *Department of Homeland Security Financial Accountability Act*. This new law requires an intensive audit designed to correct the root causes of these financial management problems. At a recent Subcommittee hearing, the DHS Chief Financial Officer unveiled a detailed blueprint for management improvements. The Subcommittee will closely monitor how DHS implements these improvements over the coming months.

### Focus on Soldier Pay and Benefits

A top priority for the Subcommittee is ensuring that financial management practices at the Department of Defense (DOD) support our

soldiers effectively. In response to investigation findings that deployed soldiers were not receiving the appropriate pay, the Subcommittee began working with DOD to improve its pay and reimbursement processes - especially for activated Reserve and National Guard soldiers. These improvements include the establishment of an Ombudsman to provide a central clearinghouse to assist Guard and Reserve soldiers with pay problems, publication of a new *Soldier's Guide to Pay and Benefits*, better training for finance officers, and a redesign of soldiers' Leave and Earnings Statements so that soldiers can more clearly understand their pay and benefits. Our soldiers serving in harm's way should not have to worry about the accuracy of their paychecks and the benefits provided them and their family members. The Subcommittee continues to prioritize its oversight responsibilities in this area.

### Reviewing the Freedom of Information Act

Enacted in 1966 after eleven years of debate, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) established a statutory right of public access to federal agency records. Recent legislative proposals (H.R. 867, S. 394) would amend the categories of information protected from disclosure and create new deadlines for agency compliance. Fast-changing technologies and national security needs significantly impact FOIA's implementation. Balancing the importance of open government with the need to protect information vital to national security and personal privacy is a constant struggle.

Witnesses at a Subcommittee hearing on FOIA earlier this year included officials from the Department of Justice, the agency responsible for providing FOIA guidance government-wide, and the National Archives and Records Administration, which faces the daunting task of electronically archiving millions of government documents. The Subcommittee also received testimony from FOIA requesters such as members of the media to better understand the opportunities to improve the process for obtaining information under FOIA.