

This Week in Washington

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Pombo hails \$1.25 million high-speed rail grant

Congressman Richard Pombo last week announced a \$1.25 million grant has been made to the California High Speed Rail Authority.

The grant, made by the Federal Railroad Administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation will assist the California High Speed Rail Authority prepare necessary environmental documentation for the proposed statewide high speed rail system. This includes preparation of methodology and framework documents to guide the program's environmental impact statement and technical studies of the specific corridors and alternatives.

"I'm grateful this important grant was made," Pombo stated. "California has led the way in federal and state partnerships in regard to railways. It is my hope that this grant will help launch a statewide high-speed rail system of which we can all be proud."

Pombo announces National Park Service grants

Congressman Richard Pombo last week announced two grants by the National Park Service. These grants are part of \$29 million in grants made available nationwide under the Urban Park and Recreation Recovery (UPARR) program.

- City of Stockton: A grant of \$1 million has been made for Edna Gleason Park, which had recreational facilities removed in 1994 due to safety concerns, while increased criminal activity resulted in the park's closure in 2000. UPARR funding will reopen the park by renovating the basketball courts, installing new walkways and a restroom building, and improving the landscaping.
- San Joaquin County: A grant of \$160,790 has been made for Boggs Tract and Raymus Village Ballfields. Current conditions make use of the fields unstable for either practice or competition. UPARR funding will provide for the complete reconstruction of the ballfields.

"These grants will help bring the parks safe for families to enjoy, and will be a tremendous asset to our community," Congressman Pombo stated. "It's my hope that we'll soon see families enjoying baseball and other recreational activities at the parks."

Pombo Wildfire Resolution unanimously approved

Last week the House Resources Committee unanimously approved H. Con. Res. 352, a resolution introduced by Congressman Richard Pombo. The resolution, known as the Wildfire Resolution, expresses the sense of Congress that federal land agencies should fully support the comprehensive prevention plan offered by the Western Governor's Association (WGA).

During the 2001 wildfire season 81,681 fires burned 3,555,138 acres, killed 15 firefighters and threatened rural communities nationwide. More than 7.4 million acres burned during 2000, destroying 861 structures, killing 16 firefighters and costing the federal government \$1.3 billion in suppression costs. Catastrophic wildfire is the greatest threat facing our western national forests today. Ecological, social and economic values are at high risk of catastrophic wildfire on 211 million acres of federal lands nationwide. More than 22,000 communities are at risk to catastrophic wildfire.

The plan offered by the WGA would protect communities by reducing the fuel that feeds wildfires through a mix of fire prevention activities and management practices, increasing the role for private, local and state contracts for fuel reduction treatments, and increasing funding of mutual aid agreements with professional state and local fire fighting agencies.

Today in History

1431 - Joan of Arc was burned at the stake in Rouen, France, at the age of 19.

1854 - The U.S. territories of Nebraska and Kansas were established.

1868 - Memorial Day was observed for the first time in the U.S.

1896 - The first automobile accident occurred in New York City.

1908 - Mel Blanc was born

1912 - The U.S. Marines were sent to Nicaragua to protect American interests.

1922 - The Lincoln Memorial was dedicated in Washington, DC.

1958 - Unidentified soldiers killed in World War II and the Korean conflicts were buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

1967 - Daredevil Evel Knievel jumped 16 automobiles in a row in a motorcycle stunt at Ascot Speedway in Gardena, CA.

1968 - The Beatles began recording the "White Album."

1971 - Mariner 9, the American deep space probe blasted off on a journey to Mars.

1989 - The "Goddess of Democracy" statue was erected in Tiananmen Square by student demonstrators.

1997 - Jesse K. Timmende-quas was convicted of raping and strangling a 7-year-old neighbor, Megan Kanka. The 1994 murder inspired "Megan's Law," requiring that communities be notified when sex offenders move in.

From www.on-this-day.com

This Year in Washington

2002 House Republican Accomplishments

If you had asked any pundit in January whether House Republicans could accomplish anything in an election year with just a five-seat majority, they probably would have advised you not to bet the family farm on it.

Think about that for a moment. The last time Republicans (or even Democrats) held such a slim majority, Dwight Eisenhower was in the White House and Ed Sullivan was in our living rooms. To achieve anything this year with so few votes is quite significant. A closer look shows just how far we've come this year:

Accelerated Tax Relief. House Republicans voted to accelerate the marriage penalty tax relief we passed last year. That tax relief will return \$900 million to over 21 million married couples beginning next year.

Defense Authorization and War Supplemental. The House of Representatives gave our Commander-in-Chief the tools he needs to fight this new war on multiple fronts. Our mission is clear, and we have given the greatest fighting force in the world the power to carry it out swiftly and effectively.

Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response. The Congress has sent to President Bush legislation designed to prevent and combat biochemical attacks. The comprehensive package would help build up vaccine and drug stockpiles, expand food safety inspections, and increase public health laboratories.

Pension and Accounting Reforms. Retirement security is one of the vexing challenges facing American families today. Our common sense reforms will give much needed peace of mind to investors shaken by the Enron debacle.

Tax Relief Guarantee. Long-term economic growth depends on the ability of individuals and businesses to make long-term investment decisions.

Border Security. The House passed legislation giving Customs agents new equipment to detect suspected terrorist activity along U.S. borders. The plan also requires commercial ships and aircraft to file passenger and cargo lists with Customs before entering and leaving the country.

Immigration Reform. Nowhere has government failed freedom-loving immigrants more than through the bureaucratic neglect at the INS. House Republicans changed all that with new missions and a customer-oriented attitude to help, not hinder, those who choose to come to the U.S. legally.

Child Custody Protection Act. The House's vote last month strengthened parental rights and cracked down on those who skirt state parental notification laws by transporting minors across state lines to get an abortion.

Improved Social Security Benefits for Women. Earlier this month, House Republicans strengthened the safety net for tens of thousands of widowed seniors.

Israel Resolution. Finally, the recent events in the Middle East are a grim reminder that Israel is fighting the same war against terror that we're fighting.

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Some Good Midterm Trivia

From a Public Opinion Strategies (R) report on the relationship between pres. job approval and the pres. party performance in midterms: "While there have only been three instances" where pres. approval exceeded 60% at the midterm mark in "the modern era" -- Kennedy in '62, Reagan in '86 and Clinton in '98 -- their party "only dropped an average of one seat in Congress."

"If 60% or higher = average loss of 1 seat"; "If between 50%-59% = average loss of 20 seats"; and "If below 50% = average loss of 46 seats" (release, 5/29).

Bush Job As President

	Now	4/02	3/02	2/02
Positive	74%	75%	77%	79%
Negative	25	23	22	20

Congressional Dems Job

	Now	4/02	3/02	2/02
Positive	45%	47%	48%	49%
Negative	45	42	43	41

House Speaker Hastert Job

	Now	4/02	3/02	2/02
Positive	33%	32%	33%	37%
Negative	25	26	25	25

Congressional GOPers Job

	Now	4/02	3/02	2/02
Positive	48%	49%	50%	50%
Negative	44	39	41	40

This Year in Washington cont.

What Lies Ahead

Of course, House Republicans are going to take the opposite approach. We're going to look forward at what we can accomplish in the remaining months of this session. Consider the following items the House will take up when we return:

Permanent Death Tax Repeal. The first week of June, the House will vote to permanently repeal a tax that haunts people even beyond the grave. We shouldn't stop there. We will keep moving elements of the President's tax relief package one bill at a time if that's what it takes to spur the Senate to act. Republicans are the party of permanent tax relief, and Senate Dems won't have the chance to forget it.

Prescription Drugs. One of our first orders of business in early June will be House action on a comprehensive, voluntary prescription drug benefit under Medicare. Nothing less will protect seniors against high out-of-pocket costs and runaway drug prices.

Appropriations. Our central focus in June and July will be moving through the regular appropriations bills based on the House-passed budget. Let me be clear. The House budget is the President's request and reflects his spending priorities. We must stand by the President or risk a protracted spending battle with a party that has no plan in the first place. We hope to move Defense and Military Construction early in the appropriations process so Senate Democrats cannot hold those packages hostage for more government spending.

Education Tax Credits. We should also expect to vote this summer on education tax credits. Less than a year after passage of the President's landmark education reforms, students are already beginning to see results. We must continue to do all we can so teachers can teach, students can learn, and parents can exercise choice.

Conference Reports. Assuming the Senate is pressured enough to act, expect a number of conference reports to be ripe during June and July. Trade Promotion Authority, bankruptcy reform, energy security, and election reform are a few examples that could be ready this summer.

From the Office of House Majority Leader Dick Armey

Democrat use Social Security scare tactics

Republicans have obtained a congressional staff memo they say proves that Democrats want to use Social Security for scare tactics, not serious debate.

The memo, mistakenly sent by e-mail to a Republican staff member on Capitol Hill, contains an apparent draft opinion piece on Social Security and reaction from staffers in the office of Rep. Marcy Kaptur, Ohio Democrat. The memo argues that President Bush and Republicans want to "privatize" Social Security, which the author likens to "corporate gambling."

But another Kaptur staff member responded that the information in the opinion piece was "not entirely factually accurate," adding: "Talk about scaring seniors — this may be a little over the top. But it is sooo fun to bash Republicans." She included an e-mail "smiley face" — :) — after her comment.

"This is exactly what Democratic leaders have been saying — scaring seniors, lying, going over the top," said Rep. Thomas M. Davis III, Virginia Republican, which made the e-mail public.

By 2016, Social Security will take in less money each year in payroll taxes than the program needs to cover beneficiaries. Last year, Mr. Bush charged a special commission with examining ways to shore up the system, and they reported back three alternatives based on personal investment accounts.

Reprinted from the Washington Times

By the Numbers

Number of bills that have passed the House and are stalled in the Senate:

50

To view a list of the stalled legislation, go to:
<http://www.freedom.gov/library/economics/dasch50.asp>

Weekly Quotes

"The demagogue is one who preaches doctrines he knows to be untrue to men he knows to be idiots."

- H. L. Mencken

"The secret of the demagogue is to appear as dumb as his audience so that these people can believe themselves as smart as he is."

- Karl Kraus

Wordsmith

dem·a·gogue

Variant(s): or

dem·a·gog /'de-m&-"gäg/

Function: noun

Etymology: Greek dEma-gOgos, from dEmos people (perhaps akin to Greek dai-esthai to divide) + agOgos leading, from agein to lead -- more at TIDE, AGENT

Date: 1648

1 : a leader who makes use of popular prejudices and false claims and promises in order to gain power

2 : a leader championing the cause of the common people in ancient times

- dem·a·gogu·ery /-"gä-g(&-)rE/ noun

- dem·a·gogy /-"gä-gE, -"gä-jE, -"gO-jE/ noun

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