

This Week in Washington

Pombo Introduces Two Vocational Education Bills

Congressman Richard Pombo today introduced two bills promoting public-private partnerships in the interest of improving vocational education.

The first bill, The Vocational Partnership Act, establishes a tax credit for companies that donate equipment and other resources that can be used for vocational training. It also establishes a tax credit for the hiring of full time students who want to work as interns in fields relating to vocational education.

The second bill, the Excellence in Vocational Education Act, creates a new competitive grant program where schools can seek out federal funding to match private sector contributions for vocational education projects. The goal is to increase student participation and achievement in vocational education. The money will also be used to strengthen teacher understanding of, and competency in, vocational education and practical application of it.

"Public-private partnerships create opportunities in vocational education," Pombo said. "One-third of high school graduates enroll in vocational education. We owe it to these students to ensure they have every opportunity for a quality education. Increasing private sector involvement in vocational education will increase opportunities for our students to succeed."

Tauzin, Pombo set first Natural Gas Task Force Meeting

In an effort to address the possibility of a looming natural gas emergency, House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman W.J. "Billy" Tauzin (R-LA) and House Resources Chairman Richard Pombo (R-CA) will chair the first meeting of the Speaker's 18-Member Task Force for Affordable Natural Gas.

"Natural gas shortages in America are causing prices to skyrocket and threatening the livelihood of our nation's most vulnerable," said Chairman Tauzin. "Factories are closing and people are losing jobs."

"Last month, Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan testified before the Committee on Energy and Commerce and told us that nothing can be done in the short-term to increase our natural gas supply. Nothing is not an acceptable answer. That is why the Speaker has formed the Task Force For Affordable Natural Gas -- to determine if something can be done about this pending crisis before it occurs. I look forward to hearing from of our task force members as we lay the groundwork for tackling this critical challenge."

The Speaker's Task Force for Affordable Natural Gas has been charged with identifying the causes of today's natural gas shortage, the impact of natural gas prices on the American economy and short and long-term plans to encourage a stable supply of natural gas to ease prices. Today's meeting kicks off a series of nationwide hearings to work on finding short-term solutions to eliminate a crisis before it occurs. The panel must report back to the Speaker by September 30th.

The Speaker's Task Force For Affordable Natural Gas will meet on Monday, July 21, 2003 at 1:30 p.m. in 2123 of the Rayburn House Office Building. The purpose of this meeting is to receive statements from the task force members. The meeting will be open to the public.

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Today in History

1536 - The authority of the pope was declared void in England.

1743 - "The New York Weekly Journal" published the first half-page newspaper ad.

1872 - The Ballot Act was passed in Great Britain, providing for secret election ballots.

1914 - Six planes of the U.S. Army helped to form an aviation division called the Signal Corps.

1932 - The U.S. and Canada signed a treaty to develop the St. Lawrence Seaway.

1936 - The first Oscar Meyer Wienermobile rolled out of General Body Company's factory in Chicago, IL.

1942 - The German Me-262, the first jet-propelled aircraft to fly in combat, made its first flight.

1944 - U.S. troops captured Saint-Lo, France, ending the battle of the hedgerows.

1947 - U.S. President Truman signed the Presidential Succession Act, which placed the Speaker of the House and the Senate President Pro Tempore next in the line of succession after the vice president.

1971 - New Zealand and Australia announced they would pull their troops out of Vietnam.

2001 - A train derailed, involving 60 cars, in a Baltimore train tunnel resulting in a six day fire closing down downtown Baltimore for several days.

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