

The Renzi Report

VOL. 3 ISSUE 2

APRIL 2005

Your Direct Link to the News and Events from Our Nation's Capital and Rural Arizona

Dear Fellow Arizonan:

This spring has been a busy, but productive time. The House recently passed a bill that I sponsored which will help give Native Americans in rural Arizona the flexibility and the tools they need to better utilize federal housing programs to plan for the future. I was also successful in adding a new alternative fuels research and development program to the House Energy Bill to study hydrogen-based public transportation in our national parks, with Grand Canyon National Park as the first test site.

I am especially pleased to let everyone know that a version of my Wounded Warrior bill was passed by the Senate last week, and is one step closer to providing disability insurance to our severely disabled veterans.

As always, feel free to tell your family members, friends and neighbors about the Renzi Report. You can sign up to receive this email and find additional information about developments in Congress at my website. Just click on the following link: <http://www.house.gov/renzi>.

If you have any questions or comments about this e-newsletter or anything else, please e-mail me at rick.renzi@mail.house.gov and I will get back to you as quickly as possible. I hope you find this Renzi Report informative. Thank you and may God bless America.



Congressman Rick Renzi

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Congressman Rick Renzi meets with Ryan Kelly, from Prescott AZ, and other wounded veterans. Ryan is the national spokesman for the Wounded Warrior Project, which is working to assist service disabled veterans with disability insurance benefits.

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Rural Arizona Legislative Update

Renzi Measure to Provide Research for New Hydrogen Transportation Technologies Passes House



The House of Representatives recently passed legislation sponsored by Congressman Rick Renzi to research new hydrogen-based transportation technologies. Renzi's measure was included as part of the House Energy bill and will provide for a first of its kind partnership between the federal government, private industry and Native American tribes to implement a new alternative fuel technologies program. The objectives of the program will be the safe transportation of passengers by the new vehicles, silent operation, low emission of pollutants, and reliability.

The research and development initiative will develop new hydrogen-based public transportation for use in sensitive ecological areas like our national parks. The energy bill now moves on to the Senate, which is expected to take up the debate in the coming weeks. Renzi's legislation will also provide a preference to tribal entities for the new research and development program, and will authorize \$400,000 for three years. The measure also requires a demonstration of hydrogen-based public transportation technology at Grand Canyon National Park.

Safford Mine Decision Affirmed by the Department of the Interior

Congressman Rick Renzi said he was thrilled to see the U.S. Department of Interior affirm an earlier Bureau of Land Management decision to approve a land exchange between the Phelps-Dodge Corporation and the federal government. The land exchange will allow the development of a proposed copper mine near Safford, Arizona which will provide a vital economic boost to the region.

The proposed copper mine will be approximately eight miles north of Safford in Southeastern Arizona. The mine will develop the San Juan and Dos Pobres copper ore bodies and could be in operation as early as 2007 or 2008. Congressman Renzi noted that it will provide an important boost to the local economy in the area by providing more than 745 jobs for Graham County, and \$4.6 million in revenue for the local governments. The annual economic impact for the region is expected to be between \$42 million and \$52 million.

BY THE NUMBERS:

2 - Renzi Bills Passed by the House this year

11 - Renzi Bills Introduced this Year

57,000 square miles – size of Arizona's 1st District (The biggest Congressional district in the nation which is not its own state)

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Veterans Legislative Update

Renzi Measure to Help Disabled Vets Picked up in the Senate

Congressman Rick Renzi said he was extremely pleased to see the Senate pass legislation similar to his to help injured veterans. Renzi's bill, called the Wounded Warrior Act (H.R. 1618), was introduced recently and would establish a disability insurance benefit for members of the Armed Forces who suffer certain specified severe disabilities. The disability payment is intended to assist members of our armed forces and their families during the injured service member's hospitalization and rehabilitation period as well as their transition to full employment. Renzi's initiative on the Senate side is sponsored by Sen. Larry Craig (Idaho) and co-sponsored by Sen. Daniel Akaka (Hawaii). The measure is included in both an amendment to the Emergency Supplemental which recently passed in the Senate, and a stand alone bill (S. 806).

Renzi noted that the initial hospital and recovery time is very stressful for service members and their families since patients are forced to recover from severe injuries far from their homes. This hospitalization often requires the service member's family to leave work for an extended period of time in order to be with their loved one, thus potentially losing a source of income and incurring tremendous travel expenses during an already stressful time. Renzi said the intent of this legislation is to provide an immediate payment for the service member and their family to ease the financial burden until the service member is discharged.

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Congressional Mailbag - In Case You Missed It...



Congressional Mailbag

Q - Congressman Renzi, Border Security is one of the most important issues facing those of us who live in the Southwest. What is Congress doing to improve and enhance our nation's border security? – Safford, AZ

A - This issue represents an urgent threat to our national security and the livelihood of Americans, both of which I am committed to defending.

Last year, I co-sponsored a bill that included funding authorizations to improve and upgrade existing infrastructure at vital entry points and hire an additional 300 customs and immigration personnel every year until 2008. I co-sponsored this important bill because we must provide better equipment, modern technology, more manpower, more platforms, and stronger budgetary resources to help stop the flow of illegal immigrants, illegal drugs and potential terrorists through the Arizona sector of the border.

On March 30, 2005, the Department of Homeland Security announced that more than 500 additional Border Patrol Agents will be deployed to Arizona this year. Between 150 and 200 agents were immediately sent to enhance Arizona's border security. While this additional manpower is a step in the right direction, many security gaps remain in our border. I will continue to fight to bring Arizona the resources necessary to protect our state and nation.

As you may know, on March 15, 2004 the Department of Homeland Security unveiled the "Arizona Border Control (ABC) Initiative."

The ABC Initiative coordinates the resources of the federal, state and local governments to achieve operational control of the Arizona border and support of the Homeland Security priority mission of anti-terrorism, detection, arrest and deterrence of all cross-border illicit trafficking. Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV's) are now being used along the border, and four additional helicopters have been assigned to provide aerial support. Finally, an additional \$1 million is being directed to establish new sensor technology to assist in surveillance and detection of illegal aliens.

Earlier this year I voted for the REAL ID Act which establishes a number of requirements that protects the freedoms of those who are here legally but helps the federal government track and deport terrorists and criminals. It requires the burden of proof to be on the applicant, further preventing terrorists from easily disguising their motives under false pretenses of seeking asylum. Asylum should only be granted to those who are oppressed in their home country.

Congressman Rick Renzi

Helping injured troops

Arizona Republic – April 25, 2005

<http://www.azcentral.com/arizonarepublic/local/articles/0425azindc25.html>

Housing bill plugs a few holes

Indian Country Today – April 26, 2005

<http://www.indiancountry.com/content.cfm?id=1096410809>

PD Land Exchange Affirmed

Eastern Arizona Courier - April 13, 2005

http://www.eacourier.com/articles/2005/04/13/local_news/news01.txt

Bridge to span Tonto Creek

The Payson Roundup – April 8, 2005

http://www.paysonroundup.com/section/frontpage_lead/story/18708