

The Renzi Report

VOL. 3 ISSUE 5

JULY 2005

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

Dear Fellow Arizonan:

The recent bombings in London and Egypt remind our nation that we must stay vigilant. The attacks only toughen our resolve to hunt and bring down this hierarchy of hate and terror. We cannot waiver in our determination to make the world safer. As our enemies seek to attack our bonds of freedom, they only strengthen our foundations of liberty.

America's unwavering determination and commitment to freedom was on display during the recent launch of the Space Shuttle. We will continue to live our lives in defiance of terror. As the only member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence from Arizona, I am committed to working to secure our borders to prevent special-interest aliens from entering our country, intent on a path of destruction.

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 (AZ-1) presents a Bronze Star Medal to the sister of U.S. Army Private First Class Charles Norton who has been listed as Missing in Action since 1945. Congressman Renzi's office was contacted by Elizabeth Leon and her husband Chuck after they learned that PFC Norton was listed as a recipient of a Bronze Star Medal.

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Arizona Border Security Update

Renzi Blasts Senate over Missed Opportunity to Expand Border Patrol

Congressman Rick Renzi said the U.S. Senate missed an important opportunity to expand the nation's Border Patrol after voting against its previous agreement to hire 2,000 more Border Patrol Agents and fund thousands of new detention beds for illegal aliens. The pledge to hire more agents and provide more detention beds was previously included in the Intelligence bill approved by the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and passed by Congress. He said their inaction on border protection places more pressure on local communities

"This vote is an example of Senate inaction on the issue of America's border security," said Congressman Renzi. "Our local communities along the southern border, especially in Arizona, are feeling the crush of illegal immigration. This lack of action by the Senate places undue pressure on local communities. I am extremely disappointed because this vote would have helped to make Border States and their residents safer."

As the only member of the Arizona Congressional delegation on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Congressman Renzi has been focused on securing America's southern borders. He is pushing an initiative to use new technology that will allow the U.S. to monitor the border with Mexico to **see** and **predict** where people are staging prior to coming across the border.

Renzi Says Al-Jazeera Documentary on America's Border Security Could Have Been Powerful Tool for Terrorists

Congressman Rick Renzi recently called on the U.S. Border Patrol to deny the Al-Jazeera television station access to sensitive southern border areas. Al-Jazeera planned to film a documentary on America's border security which Renzi said could have been a powerful potential tool for terrorists to enter the United States. Congressman Renzi said he was glad to see plans for the show dropped, but warned of increased attention by special-interest aliens in America's southern borders.

"I was extremely concerned to learn that Al-Jazeera was planning to film a documentary on America's southern border and security issues," said Congressman Renzi. "The need to secure our borders is more important than ever. This show would have had the capability to seriously undermine the safety and security of our nation, especially because the intended audience could be potential terrorists. The U.S. is seeing a disturbing increase in special-interest aliens who are trying to gain entry in the United States, and the last thing we need to do is hand over a blue print on how to enter this nation illegally."

Congressman Renzi recently traveled to Mexico City to lodge a formal complaint with the Mexican government over the pamphlet that showed illegal immigrants where to cross the border illegally. The disturbing publication issued by the Mexican government contained pictures showing how to safely make nighttime river crossings, how to stay hydrated in the heat, and how to follow power lines in the desert to reach cities and communities.

Native American and Veterans Legislative Update

Renzi Fights to Fix Homeownership Process for Native Americans

At the request of Congressman Renzi, the House Financial Services and House Resources Committees held a joint hearing on the land title process for Native Americans. The hearing focused on the complications many Native Americans face in seeking to own homes. The issue is especially severe in rural Arizona where Native Americans reside on land owned by their sovereign nations, but held in trust by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). The BIA is responsible for maintaining ownership records, title documents, and issuing title status reports to lenders to certify the legal description of tracts of trust lands, but has a backlog several years long which unnecessarily complicates the homeownership process.

“Homeownership is a vital part of safe and healthy communities,” said Congressman Renzi. “But for many Native Americans working with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the homeownership process is an unnecessarily complicated and frustrating experience. We must work to fix these problems, especially because the homeownership rate for Native Americans is well below 50 percent, while the national homeownership rate is more than 68 percent.”

Renzi said that title recordation continues to be a problem for those working with BIA. He noted that there are Native American families who get housing loans and are ready to move into their homes, but are forced to wait because mortgage companies refuse to give the new owners the keys until the BIA gives final approval.

Renzi Presents Bronze Star to Sister of WWII Army Private Missing in Action Since 1945



Congressman Rick Renzi presented a Bronze Star Medal recently to the sister of U.S. Army Private First Class Charles Norton, who has been listed as Missing in Action since 1945. Congressman Renzi met with Elizabeth Leon and Chuck Leon of Cordes Lakes, Arizona, and presented them with a posthumous Bronze Star Medal for her brother. Congressman Renzi contacted the Department of Defense on behalf of the Leons to ensure that PFC Norton’s family received his rightful medal.

Private First Class Charles Norton was on a routine patrol with the Army’s 10th Mountain Division in Vidiciatico, Italy in January 1945 when his patrol failed to report in. Several members of the patrol, including PFC Norton were listed as Missing in Action (MIA). As part of their research into PFC Norton, the Leons discovered that he was listed as a recipient of the Bronze Star Medal, yet they had never been notified of the award.

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Office Contact Information:

WASHINGTON OFFICE

418 Cannon
Washington, D.C. 20515-0301
O 202-225-2315
F 202-226-9739

FLAGSTAFF OFFICE

123 N. San Francisco Street, Suite 105
Flagstaff, AZ 86001
O 928-213-3434
F 928-213-5447

SHOW LOW OFFICE

1151 East Deuce of Clubs
Suite A
Show Low, AZ 85901
O 928-537-2800
F 928-532-5088

PRESCOTT OFFICE

107 North Cortez, Suite 208
Prescott, AZ 86301
O 928-708-9120
F 928-708-9121

CASA GRANDE OFFICE

P.O. Box 11186
Casa Grande, AZ 85203
O 520-876-0929
F 520-876-9374

WINDOW ROCK OFFICE

DNA Legal Services Building
P.O. Box 4673
Window Rock, AZ 86515
O 928-853-3750
F 928-871-4879

SAFFORD OFFICE

1420 1st Ave., Suite 100
Safford, AZ 85546
O 866-537-2800
F 928-428-8194

SAN CARLOS OFFICE

EPA Building
10 West Tonto
P.O. Box 0
San Carlos, AZ 85550

WHITERIVER OFFICE

Apache Veteran's Center
201 East Walnut
Whiteriver, AZ 85941
O 928-521-2810
F 928-532-5088

Veterans Update continued-

Renzi Fights for Veterans Healthcare Funding

The House of Representatives recently voted to correct an error in the formula used by the Department of Veterans Affairs to determine funding levels for veterans healthcare. The new legislation will ensure that veterans' healthcare programs are adequately funded. Congressman Renzi joined his colleagues to push the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee to provide necessary funds for veterans' healthcare, and fix the funding error

"Our nation owes a great debt of gratitude to the brave men and women who stand in harms way to protect our nation and our families," said Congressman Renzi. "Our service members are great patriots and deserve to know that America stands behind them. We can never repay the courageous service of these brave men and women, but we can ensure that they receive the benefits they have earned and deserve."

In Case You Missed it...

Lawmaker wary of Al Jazeera film

<http://washingtontimes.com/national/20050701-010437-2703r.htm>

Dine' College gets grant

<http://www.indiancountry.com/content.cfm?id=1096411171>

Republicans warned leaders about shortfall

<http://www.columbiatribune.com/2005/Jul/20050717News012.asp>

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Contact the Congressman

Q – Congressman Renzi, what is Congress doing to protect our private property rights in light of the recent decision by the Supreme Court expanding the eminent domain authority of local governments? – Safford, AZ

A - America's Constitution is the bedrock of our democracy. However, this decision by the U.S. Supreme Court threatens to erode it by allowing state and local governments to use their eminent domain authority to take away the property of any individual for almost any commercial economic reason. This is unprecedented in the history of our nation, and is an assault on America's private property rights.

The decision does not abide by the spirit, or the wording, of the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution, which states that private property shall not be taken "for **public use**, without just compensation." As retiring Justice Sandra Day O'Connor wrote in her dissenting opinion, this decision "eliminates any distinction between **public** and **private use** of property and effectively deletes the words 'for public use' from the Fifth Amendment." One of the most disastrous consequences of this decision is the new threat to affordable housing for lower income Americans, or those living in rural areas in states like Arizona.

America's founding fathers would bristle at this greedy lunge for private property by local governments. It was John Adams who said, "Property is surely a right of mankind as real as liberty." Private ownership of property is vital to both our freedom and our prosperity, and is essential to the fabric of our nation. In fact, much of our country's government is devoted to the preservation of personal property.

The Court's decision allows cities to bulldoze private citizens' homes to make way for

development like malls or hotels, and essentially means that no citizen's property is safe. This action has far reaching implications, especially for the poor. Areas with lower income residents are now at greater risk because they may live in older neighborhoods in prime locations that make their property attractive to economic development. Other areas that are now more vulnerable include working class and middle income neighborhoods, or areas with a high percentage of minorities. Takings that result from this decision may also disproportionately affect ranchers and farmers who own large amounts of land on which they depend for their livelihood.

This decision not only represents a tangible loss of freedom and personal rights, but has the far reaching potential to affect Americans in all fifty-states. If we allow governments to routinely displace homeowners and land owners for an ambiguous reason like economic benefit, we open ourselves up to abuse. Where is the economic benefit of forcible sale of an individual's property? What does this do to economics of real estate, and small business owners who are forced to sell against their wishes? Where is the certainty of home ownership? Who is to say that once you buy a house it is really yours, that you will not be forced to sell for some elusive public benefit which in reality is a private benefit? These are some of the more troubling questions that arise as a result of this decision by this misguided Supreme Court.

I am working with my colleagues to draft legislation to restore the property rights of all Americans and prohibit federal or state governments from using economic development as a justification for exercising the power of eminent domain. Freedom and private property in our country will be forever intertwined, because you cannot have one without the other.