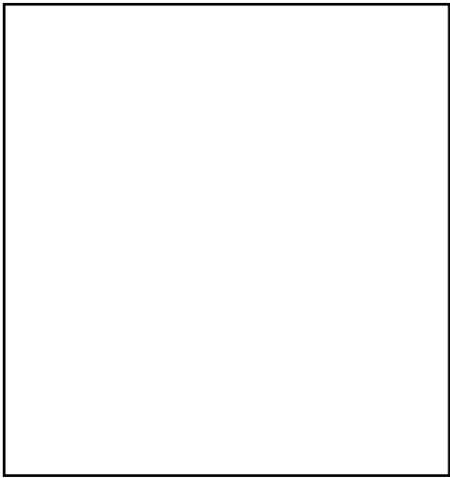


13th District  
107th Congress

UPDATE



WASHINGTON, D.C.

APRIL 2001

from  
the  
mailbag ...



Dear Pete,

I want a prescription drug plan for all seniors, not something for the states to decide.

Frances & Bill, San Lorenzo

*Dear Frances and Bill,*

*So do I.*

Dear Pete,

American anti-choice politics should not be allowed to devastate vital health care services in the developing world.

Dawn, San Leandro

*Dear Dawn*

*I agree and oppose the global "gag" rule on family planning.*

Dear Pete,

We need to exploit domestic energy resources like the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge now.

Larry, Fremont

*Dear Larry,*

*Sorry but we disagree. Drilling in ANWR is no quick fix and shouldn't be part of our long-term energy policy.*

Dear Pete,

Vote for education, health care, Social Security and Medicare and against the massive tax cuts for the rich.

Brian, Hayward

*Dear Brian,*

*I'm with you on all counts!*

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads 'Pete'.

## Stark Opposes Efforts to Raid Medicare and Social Security

### *Administration Budget Would Allow Funds To Be Used for Other Initiatives*

For all the talk about preserving Medicare and Social Security, the Bush administration's budget would, if passed by Congress, tap the trust funds of both Social Security and Medicare to finance the tax cut and other administration priorities. This is dreadful policy and I oppose it.

Medicare trust fund solvency matters. The solvency of the trust fund is a measure of how much funding exists for Medicare benefits now and in the future and it helps Congress project the need for additional revenues.

The Congress has voted numerous times in the past several years, and as recently as February 13, 2001, to prohibit Medicare trust funds from being used for any other purpose.

The administration is now making the argument that such protection is unnecessary. They argue that if the bulk of the funds they want to spend from the trust fund go into a new prescription drug benefit, then trust fund money is still being used for Medicare. But, to spend that money on a drug benefit—without adding new resources to the program—would reduce the long-term solvency of the Medicare trust fund and raise questions about Medicare's future.

The situation is no better for Social Security. The budget would reserve \$600 billion of the Social Security trust funds— not to pay benefits for those nearing retirement but to fund private savings or investment accounts for younger workers. So funds collected to pay Social Security benefits will instead be used to pay about half of the estimated \$1.1 trillion cost of privatization, the dismantling of the Social Security system.

I believe that we can and should fully fund Social Security, not raid it. And I support a Medicare drug benefit for all seniors paid for out of general revenues. We have a \$5.6 trillion projected budget surplus. Rather than spending more than \$2 trillion on a tax cut, the projected surplus should first be used to shore up the Social Security and Medicare trust funds and to pay for the cost of a long overdue Medicare prescription drug benefit.

## Stark Voted to Save Workplace Safety Regulations



Workplace safety took a back seat to industry complaints about compliance costs when Congress voted this month to overturn ergonomics regulations recently finalized by Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Ergonomics is the science of fitting the job physically to a worker to prevent injury. For example, by altering chairs, adjusting the speed of an assembly line, or using special braces to ease back strain from lifting heavy loads, workplace injuries can be significantly reduced.

The regulations, scheduled to go into effect this October, draw from the businesses that have successfully prevented ergonomic injuries or reduced their severity in the workplace. The National Academy of Sciences released a report just this year that underscored the need for the ergonomics regulations.

Repetitive injuries are one of the leading causes of work-related illness. More than 647,000 American workers suffer serious injuries and illnesses due to musculoskeletal disorders, costing businesses \$15 to \$20 billion annually

in workers' compensation costs.

Unfortunately, the ergonomics regulations are opposed by the majority party for the cost they would impose upon employers without regard for the value they would provide to the workforce.

Basic safety in the workforce should be a given, not some benefit that can be dropped at an employer's whim. I opposed efforts to overturn regulations that would enhance safety in the workplace but the majority prevailed.



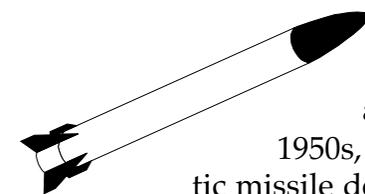
**Rep. Stark updates constituents Carl Jaramillo, Marjorie Degenstein, Deborah Williams, Frankie Anderson and Ricardo Gonzales of the Fremont UAW on the ergonomics debate and on Medicare and Social Security issues.**

## Stark Speaks Out About the National Missile Defense System

Yet another administration is ready to throw billions of dollars at a national missile defense (NMD) system. The president's budget provides an additional \$1 billion dollars for the NMD and calls for the deployment of the proposed national missile defense and its expansion to cover our allies.

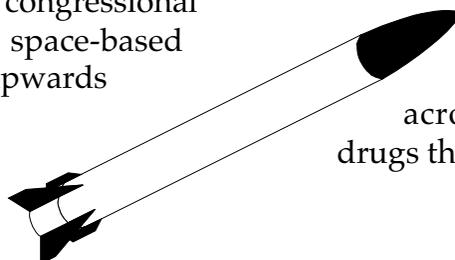
Last year, Congress allocated an additional \$6.6 billion to long-term defense plans to pay for further work on the NMD system. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that the NMD would cost \$30 to 60 billion, and if we add, as some congressional supporters would like to, sea and space-based launchers, this system would cost upwards of \$120 billion.

I believe that this project makes no sense technically, economically



and politically. Since the 1950s, the US has given ballistic missile defense research and development the highest priority and spent over \$100 billion. We have repeatedly failed to achieve our technology goals but not for lack of money or effort. Even if we could develop the NMD technology, our country would still be vulnerable to attack: The current system design could be circumvented by the use of a number of simple but varied decoys that look like a real warhead.

We would also still be vulnerable to chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons smuggled across our borders, like the illegal drugs that regularly cross our borders.



*Continued on next page.*

# Large Tax Cut Squeezes Out Other Federal Initiatives



While the president pushes for a tax cut as his first priority, he has not yet told Congress where he would make the over \$20 billion in cuts next year in domestic programs to pay for his initiatives. This is troubling because tax cuts are usually considered in the context of an overall budget. Prior administrations sent detailed budget proposals to Congress; this president doesn't want many specific domestic spending cuts announced yet because they would detract from his tax cut agenda. However, it is clear that this budget would reduce or eliminate many of the initiatives that now benefit our community.

Programs likely to have some funding cuts under the administration budget include state and local law enforcement programs, highway and mass transit projects, small business loan guarantees, security for subsidized housing projects, harbor dredging, grants for colleges and hospitals, research and development for alternative energy, environmental protection and assistance for federal emergencies.

While the administration is proclaiming major increases in education spending, one must look behind those claims. Last year, in recognition of growing needs, Congress increased education spending by 18.2%. Over the past five years, education spending has increased an average of 13% annually. The Administration's proposed increases are below those levels. In fact, the proposed

DEPARTMENT OR AGENCY	THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSED FY '02 BUDGET (in billions of dollars)	CHANGE IN PURCHASING POWER FOR THE AGENCY FROM FY 01 TO 02
AGRICULTURE	17.9	- 8.6%
COMMERCE	4.8	- 16.6%
DEFENSE	310.5	+ 1.4%
EDUCATION	44.5	+ 4.2%
ENERGY	19.0	- 6.8%
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES	56.7	+ 2.6%
HOUSING & URBAN DEVELOPMENT	30.4	- 11.3%
INTERIOR	9.8	- 7.0%
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS PROGRAMS	23.1	+ 3.4%
JUSTICE	19.9	- 8.8%
LABOR	11.3	- 7.4%
TRANSPORTATION	16.3	- 15.0%
TREASURY	14.7	- 0.1%
VETERANS AFFAIRS	23.4	+ 0.1%
CORPS OF ENGINEERS	3.9	- 16.9%
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY	7.3	- 9.4%
FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY	2.0	- 20.2%
NASA	14.5	- 1.1%
NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION	4.5	- 0.6%
SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION	.5	- 46.4%
SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION	6.4	+ 2.3%

SOURCE: HOUSE BUDGET COMMITTEE DEMOCRATIC STAFF

level of education funding is inadequate and could roll back recent improvements made. For example, this funding level could jeopardize many of the 37,000 teachers nationwide whose jobs were funded through the class

size reduction program.

If you would like more information about the budget process or are interested in additional information on federal funding, please contact my office.

## National Missile Defense System, continued from page 2.

In addition, there are political consequences in pursuing this folly. If we deploy a NMD system, we would violate the Anti-Ballistic Missile Defense treaty that the US signed and ratified in 1972. This violation creates problems with our European allies who view that treaty as having a stabilizing effect on worldwide nuclear balance. Many fear

that NMD provokes escalation rather than de-escalation in the arms race. For all these reasons, we should not fund the NMD. It would be far wiser to redirect these billions of dollars to better educate our children, provide health care, and ensure the solvency of Social Security and Medicare.



## House Passes Bankruptcy Limits— Stark Votes NO

*Bill Creates More Legal  
Hurdles and Paperwork  
Burdens for Consumers*

The House recently voted to amend bankruptcy law by making it harder for consumers to wipe out their debts. I voted NO on this bill because I thought it upset the proper balance between the interests of debtors and creditors.

Approximately 1.2 million people file bankruptcy each year. While there may be some that abuse the relief bankruptcy affords, most who file for bankruptcy are people of low and moderate incomes who fall on hard times because of medical bills, job loss or divorce.

The new bankruptcy rules would impose a complex formula for bankruptcy judges to apply that would disqualify many people from filing bankruptcy. Credit card companies pushed hard for the changes



because, now that the economy is slowing down, they fear more delinquencies and bankruptcies on debt that was accumulated when the economy was strong. But lenders don't come to this situation with clean hands. If they had scrutinized credit applications more carefully in the first place,

they could have avoided a sizable portion of the bad debt they now carry.

President Clinton vetoed virtually identical legislation last year arguing that it was slanted too much in favor of big business and against consumers. I am working with my Senate colleagues to add stronger consumer protections to the bill. Unfortunately, it is unlikely that this bill can be defeated in the Senate and President Bush has already indicated his willingness to sign the bill. By the time you receive this newsletter, the bill will most likely have been signed into law.

## PETE'S TOWN MEETINGS



**Saturday  
April 7, 2001**

### FREMONT

**9:00 - 10:00 am**

Development Services Center  
Niles Room  
39550 Liberty St.

### HAYWARD

**10:30 - 11:30 am**

City Council Chambers  
777 B Street

### SAN LORENZO

**Noon - 1:00 pm**

San Lorenzo Adult School  
Auditorium  
820 Bockman Road

*Doors open 10 minutes  
before meetings start.*

## How to reach PETE STARK

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petemaildirect@stark.house.gov  
**Web site address:**  
<http://www.house.gov/stark/>

## TIME VALUE