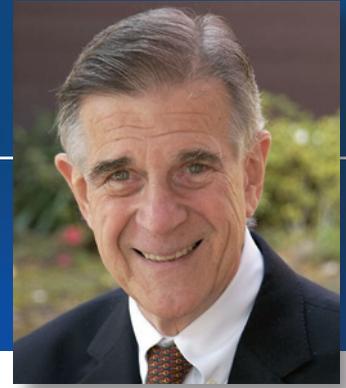


CONGRESSMAN PETE STARK

AUGUST 2006 REPORT



A NEW DIRECTION FOR AMERICA

In recent years, health care, gas, and college have become significantly more expensive. At the same time, real incomes have fallen, Social Security and Medicare have come under attack, and our national debt has soared.

I'm working with my colleagues to take America in a new direction. Our efforts include legislation to:

MAKE HEALTH CARE MORE AFFORDABLE:

It is past time we fix the prescription drug program and put people ahead of drug companies and HMOs by giving government the authority to negotiate for lower drug prices. Also overdue is significant health care reform. In late July, I introduced AmeriCare, legislation modeled on Medicare that would provide health care to the 46 million people without insurance.

LOWER GAS PRICES AND ACHIEVE ENERGY INDEPENDENCE:

Rather than support price gouging with billions in subsidies to the oil industry, America should invest in renewable energy. I support providing relief to consumers hit hard by high gas and energy prices and encouraging the development of alternative fuels.

HELP WORKING FAMILIES:

Congress should raise the minimum wage and repeal tax subsidies that encourage companies to move

jobs overseas. Because the last minimum wage increase occurred in 1997, millions of Americans are making less today, adjusted for inflation, than they have at any time in the last 50 years.

CUT COLLEGE COSTS:

Every student deserves the opportunity to attend college. But in February, Congress increased interest rates for new student and parent loans. Instead, we should lower rates, make tuition a tax-deductible expense, and expand popular Pell grants.

ENSURE A DIGNIFIED RETIREMENT:

Even as corporate executives receive hundred million dollar retirement packages, workers' pensions are being slashed or eliminated. I support pension fairness and oppose the privatization of Social Security, a program that provides economic security to 49 million Americans.

REQUIRE FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY:

Under President Clinton's leadership, America achieved a \$5.6 trillion budget surplus. Today, we have a \$3.2 trillion deficit. We should restore the budget discipline of the 1990s that helped eliminate deficits and spurred record economic growth.

If we can turn Congress' attention to these priorities, we can move America forward to a brighter future. I hope you agree.



PROTECTING YOUR PRIVACY FROM ATTACK

As Americans, we cherish our right to privacy. As embodied in the Fourth Amendment and supported by the Supreme Court, this fundamental right of citizenship protects us from unsanctioned government or corporate intrusion into our private lives.

Unfortunately, the Bush Administration is endangering this core American value. The Internal Revenue Service, the National Security Agency, and Republicans in Congress are currently overriding certain privacy protections and threatening to weaken others.

The IRS recently proposed a rule change that would allow tax preparers such as H&R Block and Jackson Hewitt to sell or distribute the sensitive information contained in tax returns – including name, address, Social Security number, employer, income, and charitable donations – to any and all interested third parties.

At the President's request, the NSA is collecting the domestic phone call records of tens of millions of Americans. Using data provided by AT&T, Verizon, and BellSouth, the NSA is keeping track of who people are calling, and when. Even more troubling, the government is currently eavesdropping – without warrants – on Americans' international calls and emails.



In the name of promoting health information technology – a goal I support – the majority party is endangering the privacy of our medical information. A bill under consideration would give the federal Secretary of Health and Human Services the authority to override stronger state privacy laws, risking dissemination of HIV/AIDS status, mental health treatments and reproductive history. Unauthorized release of this information could have dire consequences for a person's ability to obtain or maintain employment and health insurance.

I am fighting against efforts

to erode our privacy rights. I introduced the Taxpayer Privacy Act to prevent the sale and distribution of confidential taxpayer information and co-sponsored legislation directing the President to cease NSA wiretapping. I also authored amendments to the health information technology legislation before Congress that would strengthen medical privacy and protect state laws.

The majority party has rejected these efforts and the bipartisan tradition of protecting American privacy. But I will continue to work with like-minded colleagues to ensure that fundamental rights aren't abridged in the name of "freedom" or corporate profits.

TIPS ON PREVENTING IDENTITY THEFT

Even as President Bush and the Republican Congress weaken privacy rights, consumers can take proactive steps to protect their personal and financial data. Here are a few easy steps you can take:

- Protect your Social Security number. Don't carry your Social Security card in your wallet or give your number to strangers who contact you.
- Shred important documents. Shred financial statements, medical information, and receipts before throwing them away.
- Guard your mail. Take outgoing mail to a collection box or your post office. If you have Internet access, consider paying your bills online rather than sending checks through the mail.
- Get checks at the bank. When ordering new checks, pick them up from the bank rather than having them mailed to you.

- Never click on links sent in unsolicited emails; instead, type in a web address you know.

- Review your credit report for errors. Federal law requires consumer reporting agencies to provide consumers with a free copy of their report once a year. Visit www.AnnualCreditReport.com or call (877) 322-8228.

If you suspect you're a victim of identity theft...

- Place a "Fraud Alert" on your credit reports. This makes it harder for new accounts to be opened in your name. A call to one company is sufficient:
 - Equifax: (888) 766-0008
 - Experian: (888) 397-3742
 - TransUnion: (800) 680-7289
- Close accounts. Close any accounts that have been tampered with or established fraudulently.
- File a police report. A copy of the report will help you work to re-establish your credit.



KEY VOTES RECENTLY TAKEN IN CONGRESS

PROMOTING STEM CELL RESEARCH - HR 810: The Senate passed legislation, already approved by the House, to expand federally-funded research on embryonic stem cells that are scheduled to be discarded from fertilization clinics. The President vetoed the legislation on July 19th and the House attempted to override that veto later that same day. Stark voted YES, the override failed by a vote of 235-193 (2/3 required for passage).

OFFSHORE OIL DRILLING – HR 4761: Legislation to allow for expanded oil and gas drilling on our Outer Continental Shelf – including California's coastline. Passed the House by a vote of 232-187, Stark voted NO.

VOTING RIGHTS ACT – HR 9: Legislation to update and extend the historic Voting Rights Act which was first enacted during the height of the Civil Rights movement in 1965. It ended the most blatant forms of discrimination in voting practices. Its extension is a clear statement that our nation protects the right to vote for citizens of every race and ethnicity. Passed the House by a vote of 390-33, Stark voted YES.

ESTATE TAX - HR 5638: Legislation that would extend and expand federal tax breaks for estates. This bill costs \$800 billion in its first 10 years and much of the benefit goes to those with estates worth \$20 million and up – not your typical farm or small business inheritance. Passed the House by a vote of 269-156, Stark voted NO.

FEDERAL MARRIAGE AMENDMENT – HJRES 918: Legislation to amend the Constitution to prohibit gay and lesbian couples from getting married or receiving any of the rights of marriage (inheritance, hospital visitation, etc.). In order for a constitutional amendment to be approved by Congress, it must achieve the support of 2/3 of the House and Senate. The Senate had already defeated the measure so the amendment had no chance of moving forward. It also failed to achieve a 2/3 majority in the House, with a final vote of 236-187. Stark voted NO.



CONGRESSMAN PETE STARK
39300 Civic Center Drive, Suite 220
Fremont • California • 94538

www.house.gov/stark
(510) 494-1388

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Official Business

This mailing was prepared, published
and mailed at taxpayer expense.

Pete Stark
M.C.
PRESORTED STANDARD

PETE'S TOWN MEETINGS

LET ME HEAR FROM YOU.

Please contact my Fremont office, send me an email or visit my website for assistance with federal agencies, updates on important legislation, and information on visits to Washington, D.C.

Fremont Office
(510) 494-1388

Email
petemail@mail.house.gov

Website
www.house.gov/stark



You can sign up for my
e-mail newsletters at
www.house.gov/stark

SATURDAY, AUGUST 12, 2006

NEWARK

9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
Newark City Hall
Council Chambers
37101 Newark Boulevard

SAN LEANDRO

11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
San Leandro City Hall
Council Chambers
835 East 14th Street

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2006

FREMONT

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.
Fremont Senior Center
40086 Paseo Padre Parkway

SAN LORENZO

10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
San Lorenzo Adult School
820 Bockman Road

ALAMEDA

12:00 Noon – 1:00 p.m.
Alameda City Hall
Council Chambers
2263 Santa Clara Avenue