12TH DISTRICT ADVISORY NEWSLETTER

Fall 2005

Congressman Mel Watt

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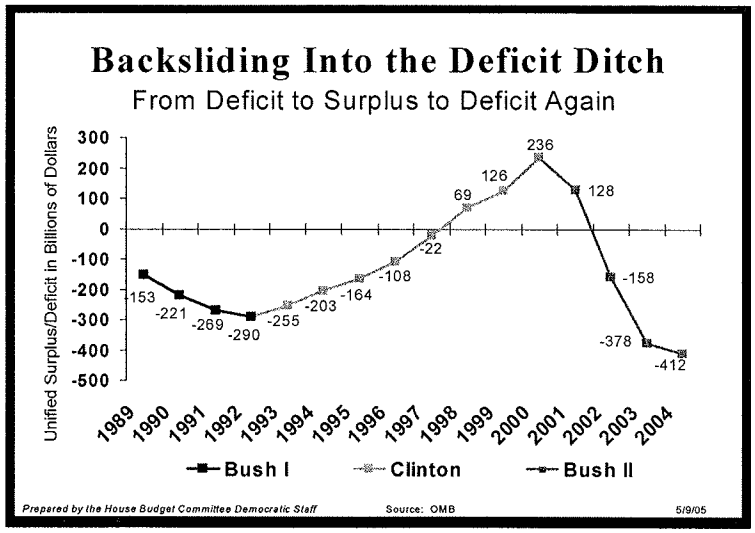
Mel's Comments: Not Enough Money

During the August recess I held six town hall meeting in various parts of the 12th District. The recurring theme that seemed to ring through every meeting (regardless of whether the topic was providing better education, housing or homeland security, stopping illegal immigration or responding to the myriad of other challenges we face) was the lack of resources to do an adequate job of meeting the needs. The following Chart despicts the problem - persistent deficit spending that is not projected to get any better unless dramatic changes are made.



A downturn in the economy for several years, additional expenditures on homeland security following the events of 9/11 and the Iraq War certainly contributed to the deteriorating fiscal situation over the last five years. However, all the experts agree that the largest contributing factor (40% to 60% depending on which expert you believe) has been the massive tax cuts that have made it impossible for the federal government to collect the resources required to address our needs. Unfortunately, the full impact of these tax cuts won't trigger until 2010 or later and the problem will get inordinately worse.

Let me be clear that I voted against most of these massive tax cuts, especially those that so dramatically and disproportionately benefit people who make more than $200,000 per year. The debate about tax cuts and whether they should be permanent or be rolled back will inevitably continue. I still believe that the overwhelming majority of my constituents would favor less tax cuts for the richest 1-5% of the population and more resources for education, housing, homeland security, healthcare and the many other needs we have. That's a perspective I believe many of my colleagues would do well to understand. Balancing a budget is a function of both income and spending and the federal government simply doesn't have enough income now to meet the reasonable needs of people for services.

HOUSE UPDATE

Since our last Newsletter, the following are some of the bills that have passed the House:

- H.R. 241, To accelerate the income tax benefits for cash contributions to charities for the relief of victims of the Indian Ocean tsunami. Mel voted yes. *Signed into law by the President.*
- H.R. 310, To increase penalties for violations by television and radio broadcasters of the prohibitions against transmission of obscene, indecent and profane material and for other purposes. *Mel voted yes.*
- H.R. 749, To amend the Federal Credit Union Act to provide expanded access for persons in the field of membership of a Federal credit union to money order, check cashing and money transfer services. *Passed the House by voice vote.*
- H.R. 841, To require States to hold special elections to fill vacancies in the House of Representatives not later than 49 days after the vacancy is announced by the Speaker of the House of Representatives in extraordinary circumstances. *Mel voted yes.*
- H.R. 1038, To amend title 28, United States Code, to allow a judge to whom a case is transferred to retain jurisdiction over certain multidistrict litigation cases for trial, and for other purposes. *Passed the House by voice vote.*
- H.R. 1134, To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the proper tax treatment of certain disaster mitigation payments. *Passed the House by voice vote and signed into law by the President.*
- H.R. 1160, To reauthorize the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families block grant program through June 30, 2005. *Passed the House by voice vote and was signed into law by the President.*
- H.R. 1268, an act making Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for Defense, the Global War on Terror, and Tsunami Relief, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2005. *Mel voted yes. Signed into law by the President.*
- HR.1270, To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the Leaking Underground Storage Tank Trust Fund financing rate. *Mel voted yes. Signed into law by the President.*
- H.R. 1279, Gang Deterrence and Community Protection Act of 2005. *Mel voted no.*
- H.R. 1544, Faster and Smarter Funding for First Responders Act of 2005. *Mel voted yes.*
- H.R. 1815, National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006. *Mel voted no.*
- H.R. 2360, Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2006. *Mel voted yes.*
- H.R. 2361, Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2006. *Mel voted yes.*
- H.R. 2419, Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act, 2006. *Mel voted yes.*
- H.R. 2520, Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Act of 2005. *Mel voted yes.*
- H.R. 2528, Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act, 2006. *Mel voted yes.*
- H.R. 2566, Surface Transportation Extension Act of 2005. *Passed the House by voice vote and was signed into law by the President.*

- H.R. 2744, Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2006. *Mel voted yes.*
- H.R. 2745, United Nations Reform Act of 2005. *Mel voted no.*
- H.R. 2862, Science, State, Justice, Commerce, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2006. *Mel voted yes.*
- H.R. 3045, Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act (DR-CAFTA). *Mel voted no. Passed the Senate and was signed into law by the President.*
- H.R. 3070, National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2005. *Mel voted yes.*
- H.R. 3071, To permit the individuals currently serving as Executive Director, Deputy Executive Directors, and General Counsel of the Office of Compliance to serve one additional term. *Passed the House by voice vote and was signed into law by the President.*
- H.R. 3130, Veterans Medical Services Supplemental FY2005. *Mel votes yes.*
- H.R. 3332, Highway and Transit Programs Extension Bill. *Passed the House by voice vote and was signed into law by the President.*
- H.R. 3199, USA PATRIOT and Terrorism Reauthorization Act of 2005. *Mel voted no.*

COMMITTEE UPDATE

Financial Services Committee

Since our last Newsletter the Financial Services Committee, on which Mel serves, favorably reported the following bills to the House:

- H.R. 358, "Little Rock Central High School Desegregation 50th Anniversary Commemorative Coin Act" *(reported by voice vote)*;
- H.R. 1185, "Federal Deposit Insurance Reform Act of 2005" *(reported by voice vote)*;
- H.R. 1224, "Business Checking Freedom Act of 2005" *(reported by voice vote)*;
- H.R. 68, "NASA and JPL 50th Anniversary Commemorative Coin Act" *(reported by voice vote)*;
- H.R. 458, the Military Personnel Financial Services Protection Act *(reported by voice vote)*;
- H.R. 749, the Expanded Access to Financial Services Act of 2005 *(reported by voice vote)*;
- H.R. 280, the Brownfields Redevelopment Enhancement Act *(reported by voice vote)*;
- H.R. 804, to exclude from consideration as income certain payments under the national flood insurance program *(reported by voice vote)*; and
- H.R. 902, the Presidential $1 Coin Act *(reported by voice vote)*;

The Financial Services Committee also held a number of hearings since the last Newsletter. On May 24, 2005 two subcommittees, Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit and Housing and Community Opportunity, held a joint hearing entitled, "Legislative Solutions to Abusive Mortgage Lending Practices." At the beginning of March, Mel introduced H.R. 1182, The Prohibit Predatory Lending Act, in an effort to curb predatory lending.

Judiciary Committee

Since our last Newsletter some of the bills the Judiciary Committee, on which Mel serves, favorably reported to the House include:

- H.R. 3402, the Department of Justice FY2006-FY2009 Authorization bill *(reported by voice vote)*;
- H.Res. 336, Requesting that the President focus appropriate attention on neighborhood crime prevention and community policing, and coordinate certain Federal efforts to participate in "National Night Out" *(reported by voice vote)*;
- H.Res. 378, Recognizing and honoring the 15th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 *(reported by voice vote)*;
- H.Con. Res. 216, Expressing the sense of the Congress that, as Congress observes the 40th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and encourages all Americans to do the same, it will advance the legacy of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 by ensuring the continued effectiveness of the Act to protect the voting rights of all Americans *(reported by voice vote)*;
- H.R. 3199, USA PATRIOT and Terrorism Prevention Reauthorization Act of 2005 *(Mel voted no)*;
- H.R. 184, the Controlled Substances Export Reform Act of 2005 *(reported by voice vote)*;
- H.R. 869, To amend the Controlled Substances Act to lift the patient limitation on prescribing drug addiction treatments by medical practitioners in group practices *(reported by voice vote)*;
- H.R. 3020, the United States Parole Commission Extension and Sentencing Commission Authority Act of 2005 *(reported by voice vote)*;
- H.R. 1442, the Death on the High Seas Act *(reported by voice vote)*;
- H.R. 800, the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act, by a vote of 22-12 *(Mel voted no)*;
- H.R. 420, the Lawsuit Abuse Reduction Act of 2005, by a vote of 19-11 *(Mel voted no)*;
- H.R. 554, the Personal Responsibility in Food Consumption Act, by a vote of 16-8 *(Mel voted no)* and
- H.R. 2293, To provide special immigrant status for aliens serving as translators with the United States Armed Forces *(reported by voice vote)*.

The Committee also held several oversight hearings on the "USA PATRIOT Act" and an oversight hearing entitled, "Industry Competition and Consolidation: The Telecom Marketplace Nine Years After the Telecom Act."

The Subcommittee on Commercial and Administrative Law, on which Mel is the ranking Democrat, held several hearings, including an oversight hearing on the "Implementation of the Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act of 2005," about the preparations of the Executive Office of U.S. Trustees Office to implement the Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act.

The Subcommittee also held oversight hearings on the Legal Services Corporation and Mutual Fund Trading Abuses.

GRANTS AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

International Educators Program: In the July 14, 2005 *Federal Register* the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) and the Office of Global Educational Programs announced the availability of funding for the International Educators Program (funding opportunity number ECA/A/S/X-06-03). The International Educators Program will bring secondary teachers from Southeast Asia, the Near East, South Asia (except Afghanistan) and Russia to the United States to further develop expertise in their subject areas, to enhance their teaching skills and to increase their knowledge about the United States. The goals of the program are (1) to contribute to the improvement of teaching in the participating countries, (2) to provide opportunities for under-served populations, especially women, to have important professional and other opportunities in the U.S. to enhance their ability to contribute to national development, (3) to create among teachers a deeper understanding of the U.S. so they can share their experiences of living in a diverse democratic society with students and teachers in their home communities and (4) to develop productive and lasting relationships and mutual understanding between American and international teachers and their students. ***The application deadline is September 9, 2005.*** Applications may be submitted by public and private non-profit organizations. To request an application package, contact Patricia Mosley of the Fulbright Teacher Exchange Branch, ECA/A/S/X, Room 349, U.S. Department of State, SA-44, 301 4th Street SW Washington, D.C. 20547, (202)619-4556, fax (202)401-1433, MosleyPJ@state.gov or visit the Department of Education's Web site at http://exchanges.state.gov/education/rfgps/menu.htm to download the package from the Internet. For further information, contact Rozina Damanwala, Office of Global Educational Programs, ECA/A/S/X, Room 349, U.S. Department of State, SA-44, 301 4th Street SW, Washington, D.C. 20547, (202) 619-6589, fax 202-401-1433, DamanwalaRR@state.gov.

Striving Readers: In the August 15, 2005 *Federal Register* the U.S. Department of Education Office of Elementary and Secondary Education announced the availability of funding for the Striving Readers program (*Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance* number 84.371A). The purpose of the Striving Readers program is to raise the reading achievement levels of middle and high school-aged students in Title I-eligible schools with significant numbers of students reading below grade level. The program supports new comprehensive reading initiatives or expansion of existing initiatives that improve the quality of literacy instruction across the curriculum, provide intensive literacy interventions to struggling adolescent readers and help to build a strong, scientific research base for identifying and replicating strategies that improve adolescent literacy skills. ***The deadline to submit notice of intent to apply is September 14, 2005 and the formal application deadline is November 14, 2005.*** Local educational agencies with Title-I eligible schools are eligible to apply. To request an application package, contact the Education Publications Center, P.O. Box 1398, Jessup, MD 20794-1398, (877) 433-7827, fax (301) 470-1244, TDD, (877) 576-7734, http://www.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html, edpubs@inet.ed.gov. The Department will conduct a series of briefings on this competition by conference call to clarify the purposes of the program, the selection criteria and the competition process. Consult the Striving Readers Web site at http://www.ed.gov/programs/strivingreaders for dates and times of the pre-application meetings. For further information, contact Kathryn Doherty, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Room 3W309, Washington, DC 20202-6132, (202) 205-6272, StrivingReaders@ed.gov.

Enhancing Practice Improvement in Community-Based Care for Prevention and Treatment of Drug Abuse or Co-occurring Drug Abuse and Mental Disorders: On August 17, 2005, on www.Grants.gov, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services National Institutes of Health (NIH) announced the availability of funding for the Enhancing Practice Improvement in Community-Based Care for Prevention and Treatment of Drug Abuse or Co-occurring Drug Abuse and Mental Disorders program (*Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance* numbers 93.279, 93.242 and 93.243, Request for Applications number RFA-DA-06-001). This program is intended to enhance the capacity of community-based providers of drug abuse prevention/treatment services, including services for individuals with co-occurring mental disorders, to conduct practice improvement research. Such research may entail the examination of therapeutic and/or business practices currently in use but lacking scientific evidence of effectiveness, or it may entail examination of the adoption, implementation and sustained use of science-based therapeutic and/or business innovations. ***The deadline to submit notice of intent to apply is November 18, 2005 and the formal application deadline is December 19, 2005.*** Community-based providers, organizations or agencies that deliver services to prevent or treat substance abuse disorders or co-occurring substance abuse and mental disorders in a nonacademic setting are eligible to apply. Application forms and instructions are available at both www.Grants.gov and http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html. For further information, visit www.Grants.gov.

SATELLITE OFFICES

Schedule

In order to provide convenient services to all constituents in the 12th District, my staff maintains regular office hours in municipal offices throughout the 12th district. The schedule for August, September and October is as follows:

AUGUST

1 Forsyth	2 Davidson Guilford	3 Forsyth	4 Rowan
8 Forsyth Mecklenburg	9	10 Forsyth	11 Rowan
15 Forsyth	16 Davidson Guilford	17 Forsyth	18 Rowan
22 Forsyth Mecklenburg	23	24 Forsyth	25 Rowan
29 Forsyth	30	31 Forsyth	1 Rowan

SEPTEMBER

5 CLOSED LABOR DAY	6 Davidson Guilford	7 Forsyth	8 Rowan
12 Forsyth Mecklenburg	13	14 Forsyth	15 Rowan
19	20 Davidson Guilford	21 Forsyth	22 Rowan
26 Forsyth Mecklenburg Cabarrus	27	28 Forsyth	29 Rowan

OCTOBER

3 Forsyth	4 Davidson Guilford	5 Forsyth	6 Rowan
10 columbus day	11	12 Forsyth	13 Rowan
17 Forsyth Mecklenburg	18 Davidson Guilford	19 Forsyth	20 Rowan
24 Forsyth Mecklenburg Cabarrus	25	26 Forsyth	27 Rowan
31 Forsyth			

Locations

CABARRUS COUNTY
9000 Aviation Blvd., Concord, NC
12p-2p

FORSYTH COUNTY
2301 N. Patterson Ave., Winston-Salem, NC
9a-5p

MECKLENBURG COUNTY
216 S. Main St., Davidson, NC
9a-11a

DAVIDSON AND GUILFORD COUNTIES
28 West Center St., Lexington, NC
9a-11a
10 Salem St., Thomasville, NC
11:30a-1:30p
211 South Hamilton St., High Point, NC
2:30p-4:30p

ROWAN COUNTY
130 W. Innes St., Salisbury, NC
9a-5p

U.S. Service Academy Nominations

Each year I nominate qualified graduating high school seniors from the 12th Congressional District for appointment to the U.S. Military, Naval, Air Force and Merchant Marine Academies. The U.S. Coast Guard Academy does not require a nomination.

The deadline for submitting a completed application to my office is November 1, 2005. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our Service Academy Coordinator, Sharon Fisher, at 336-275-9950.

The Citizen Soldier Support Program

The Citizen Soldier Support Program (CSSP) is designed to create a local, civilian community-centered climate of support for all military affiliated personnel and families. The mission of the CSSP is to mobilize community organizations and services to support and strengthen local citizen soldiers (National Guard and Reserve soldiers), their families and loved ones. In its inaugural year, the CSSP will serve as a demonstration initiative across North Carolina with the ultimate goal of nationwide implementation. The CSSP is targeting faith communities, schools, child and youth services, recreation programs, libraries, civic and veteran organizations, business communities, medical communities, cooperative extensions and other related public and nonprofit organization to participate in this program. To learn more about opportunities related to the Citizen Soldier Support Program, visit http://www.RibbonsToReality.org.

Spam E-mails

Do you receive lots of junk email messages from people you don't know? As more people use email, marketers are increasingly using email messages to pitch their products and services. Some consumers find unsolicited commercial email (also known as "spam") annoying and time consuming and others have lost money responding to bogus offers that arrived by email.

The Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) Web site has information about the FTC's recent law enforcement actions against deceptive commercial email and spammers' responsibilities under the CAN-SPAM law. In the "For Consumers" section, you will find tips on how to reduce the amount of spam email in your in-box.

If you get spam emails that you think are deceptive, forward them to spam@uce.gov. The FTC collects the spam in this database and uses persistent patterns to pursue law enforcement actions against people or companies that send deceptive email.