

**Town Meetings set for August — See schedule on page 3**

*Alabama's First District*

**CONGRESSMAN JO BONNER**

**THE WASHINGTON REPORT**



2236 Rayburn House Office Building ★ Washington, DC 20515 ★ (202) 225-4931 ★ Summer/Fall 2009



*Dear Friends,*

As you may imagine, the last eight months have been a blur with the dizzying, break-neck speed with which Congress and the new Administration have brought about their long-promised “change” for the American people. I presume many of you are equally concerned that this Congress is moving too fast and too far away from our south Alabama values.

Make no mistake, the new Democrat administration and even larger majorities in both the House and Senate, almost guaranteed that all major policy decisions on everything from national security to energy, the environment and health care policy — even the \$787 billion economic stimulus bill passed in mid-February, without a single Republican vote — would be decided by the Democrats that are now in total control of our nation’s capital.

While that hasn’t stopped many of us in the minority from speaking out, often in the strongest possible terms, about the significant risks that come with such record levels of borrowing and spending, the frustrating, but sobering, fact remains there is little we can do to stop a bad bill from becoming law. There is even less we can do to pass a good bill. This is true unless the American people are willing to stand up, speak out and make their voices heard. As House Minority Leader John Boehner promised back on January 6, the opening day of the 111th Congress, “when

(President Obama) extends his hand across the aisle to do what is right for the country, Republicans will extend ours in return.”

Leader Boehner went on to say the minority would “strive not to be the party of opposition, but the party of better solutions.”

To his credit, President Obama initially pledged to seek consensus from both parties on many of the major issues facing America today, regrettably, the olive branch of bipartisanship and cooperation was never, in turn, extended by the House majority.

As a result, while the American people are doing their very best trying to keep their heads above water, Congress is unfortunately not doing our best to live up to our end of the bargain.

*Let’s face it...in towns and cities throughout south Alabama, these are trying times for many First District families who are struggling just to pay their bills and stay in their homes.*

Let’s face it...in towns and cities throughout south Alabama, these are trying times for many First District families who are struggling just to pay their bills and stay in their homes.

Small businesses — long considered the backbone of the American economy — are being forced to choose between cutting jobs and keeping their doors open.

Health care costs are exploding right before our very eyes while college savings programs, like the state of Alabama’s PACT program, as well as 401K and other retirement funds, have declined in value, if not disappeared outright.

Regrettably, too many south Alabamians are facing an economic uncertainty that is unlike any time since the Great Depression.

Instead of producing common-sense solutions

See **Letter** continued on page 2

*Thank you for your sacrifice... You are not forgotten*



*Petty Officer  
Matthew J. O'Bryant*



*Lieutenant Colonel  
Mark Stratton*

Sadley, over the past 12 months, south Alabama has added two more names to the list of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in defending liberty around the globe: Petty Officer Third Class Matthew J. O’Bryant and Lieutenant Colonel Mark E. Stratton.

Petty Officer O’Bryant, age 22 and a native of Theodore, was killed on Saturday, September 20, 2008, when a suicide bomber detonated a truck with explosives at the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad, Pakistan.

Then on Memorial Day 2009, Lt. Col. Mark E. Stratton, age 39, of Foley, was killed when an improvised explosive device detonated as his convoy was passing in a rural part of Afghanistan.

We remember both Matthew and Mark — as well as all the young men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice. May God continue to bless their families during their time of grief, and may He watch over all those who continue to serve their country and the cause of freedom.

**Inside this edition...**

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(Letter continued from page 1)

that Democrats, Republicans and independents could all support, it seems the only answer many of our "leaders" know is higher taxes, more increased spending and even more big-government solutions with the promise that Washington somehow knows best.

As you look over this edition of "Congressional Report," keep in mind two important facts.

First, I work for you.

While we can't make a federal department or agency rule in your favor, keep in mind that we always consider it an honor to represent you and your interests — never at any cost — when you are experiencing a problem with some area

of the federal bureaucracy. If you are in doubt about whether we can be of assistance, just give us a call, toll free, at 1-800-288-8721.

Second, even though there are many legitimate reasons to be concerned about where we are headed as a nation (for instance, who would have ever imagined, even a few short months ago, that the American taxpayers would today own



**Head Coach Charlie Shipp and members of Davidson High School Girls' Varsity Basketball team – the Lady Warriors – met with me in my Mobile office earlier this summer to hear what is going on in Washington.**



**A visit to Alma Bryant High School earlier this summer afforded us the opportunity to talk about how the federal government works.**

*them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children — and our children's children — what it was once like in the United States where men were free."*

No matter whether you support the policies coming out of Washington or, like me, you are concerned that we just seem to be digging a deeper and deeper hole, I hope to see you during the week of August 17. Come share your thoughts and ideas, and together, let's work to make sure America's — and south Alabama's — best days remain in front of us.

*To Bonner*

## find us on facebook

In an effort to continue to provide the constituents of Alabama's First District with improved online service and information, we have recently unveiled my official page on Facebook.

Please become a friend of my page so you can continue to stay up-to-date on what we are working on in Washington and throughout southwest Alabama.

This is part of our ongoing efforts to expand constituent outreach by utilizing newer technology to share information with you. I also continue to write a weekly column and publish a monthly cyber report. If you are interested in receiving these updates from my office, you can sign up on my website <http://bonner.house.gov>.

## NEW VETERANS CEMETERY TO BE BUILT IN BALDWIN COUNTY

Since the early 1960s, Mobile's National Veterans Cemetery has been closed to active burials.

For years, my predecessor, Congressman Sonny Callahan, and I worked with local veterans groups throughout southwest Alabama in an effort to expand the Mobile cemetery. Unfortunately, there was no land either adjacent to — or in close proximity to — the current location on Virginia Street that was suitable for such an expansion.

Obviously, this has caused quite a hardship on countless veterans and their families. It was also quite a slap in the face to many of Alabama's most dedicated and deserving men and women who served their country and, in many cases, gave their all.

While an expansion to the national cemetery was not possible, our office worked with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, along with Senators Richard Shelby and Jeff Sessions, to explore another option — a federally-funded grant called the State Veterans Cemetery Grant program.

This grant will use your federal tax dollars to build the very first state of Alabama Veterans Cemetery — to national cemetery standards — at beautiful Saluda Hill near Spanish Fort. The state of Alabama will be responsible for the maintenance of the cemetery once it is completed. Clearly, this is a "win-win" by any measure!

Many people deserve credit for helping to make this new cemetery a reality...in fact, too many to list.

In addition to a number of local and state officials who were involved, there were dozens of leaders from local veterans groups who came together for the common goal of making this work.

Suffice it to say, it was with a tremendous sense of pride that Governor Bob Riley signed this state legislation into law right before Memorial Day 2009, creating Alabama's first state veterans cemetery.

While a "thank you" is never enough to honor these brave men and women, I am hopeful this cemetery will provide many in southwest Alabama an opportunity to honor the very people that have kept America free.



**I was pleased to join Governor Bob Riley as he signed legislation creating a state veterans' cemetery in Spanish Fort.**

## Tanker Competition Continues



The “on-again, off-again” journey to replace the ever-aging KC-135 Aerial Refueling Tanker was on-again at the time this newsletter was going to press.

By now, almost anyone who has even driven through south Alabama on the way to the beach has probably heard the saga of the tanker replacement competition.

Since 2001, the Pentagon has been in the process of replacing these aging aircraft — many which average 50 years in service. In fact, of the some 550 tankers in the Air Force inventory, roughly 25 percent of them are grounded at any given time, unable to fly because mechanics are taking parts from one to keep another in the air. Clearly, these planes are showing the strain of their age as more and more time lapses.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates has once again declared it a priority to modernize our tanker fleet, even though a new tanker has not yet been built.

While some in Congress continue to believe it will likely take a dual contract between Boeing and the Northrop Grumman/EADS team to finally get this program underway, Secretary Gates has remained steadfast in his opposition to the idea of a split buy.

Regardless, this is for certain...somehow, someway, we must move this project forward as a matter of national security.

The men and women who depend on these planes deserve to have the most modern and capable aircraft possible, and the American taxpayer deserves to have the plane that represents the best value, not just the lowest price.

While currently a new Request For Proposal is being debated behind closed doors at the Pentagon, I remain convinced that as long as there is a fair competition, Team Alabama will once again win the Aerial Refueling Tanker contract.

As they say in Hollywood, let’s get on with the show!

## Port Update

For years, the Port of Mobile has needed a new turning basin to accommodate larger ships that wish to utilize our port. Recently, the Port of Mobile was awarded \$24.9 million in federal stimulus funds to construct this much-needed turning basin.

As you may know, the Port of Mobile currently ranks as the 10th largest U.S. seaport in total volume. With the new container terminal already online and a new turning basin just around the corner, the Port will soon be able to host some of the world’s largest ships in a shorter time frame than ever before.

Make no mistake, this turning basin is critical to our region’s future economic development as it will create new import and export opportunities benefiting not only Alabama, but the entire United States.

While the country has experienced some challenging economic times, it is reassuring to see our port bring more industry, more jobs, and a brighter future for all who call southwest Alabama home.



*The new turning basin will enable the Port of Mobile to host larger ships in a shorter time frame than ever before.*

## 19 Town Meetings Scheduled

This month, I will once again be holding town hall meetings in all six counties of Alabama’s First District. Our office holds frequent town hall meetings whenever the legislative calendar permits.

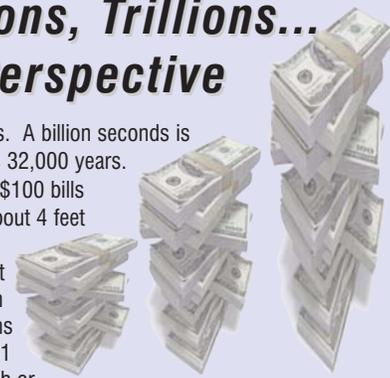
By the end of August, I will have held 204 official town meetings throughout the First District.

I hope you will be able to join my staff and me for a town meeting near you.

<b>Monday, August 17</b>		<b>Tuesday, August 18</b>	
9:00 - 10:00 a.m. - <b>Mobile</b> Mobile Regional Senior Community Center		8:30 - 9:30 a.m. - <b>Citronelle</b> City Hall	
10:30 - 11:30 a.m. - <b>Tillman's Corner</b> Tillman's Corner Community Center		10:30 - 11:30 a.m. - <b>Wagarville</b> Senior Center	
1:30 - 2:30 p.m. - <b>Dauphin Island</b> Town Hall		2:00 - 3:00 p.m. - <b>Miltry</b> Town Hall	
3:30 - 4:30 p.m. - <b>Chickasaw</b> City Hall		4:00 - 5:00 p.m. - <b>Grove Hill</b> Town Hall	
<b>Wednesday, August 19</b>		<b>Thursday, August 20</b>	
8:30 - 9:30 a.m. - <b>Beatrice</b> First Baptist Church		8:00 - 9:00 a.m. - <b>Bay Minette</b> City Hall	
10:30 - 11:30 a.m. - <b>Monroeville</b> Old Monroe County Courthouse		10:00 - 11:00 a.m. - <b>Atmore</b> Poarch Creek Indian Reservation Auditorium	
1:30 - 2:30 p.m. - <b>Uriah</b> Volunteer Fire Department		2:00 - 3:00 p.m. - <b>East Brewton</b> City Hall	
3:30 - 4:30 p.m. - <b>Stockton</b> Stage Coach Restaurant			
<b>Friday, August 21</b>			
9:00 - 10:00 a.m. - <b>Robertsdale</b> City Hall			
10:30 - 11:30 a.m. - <b>Magnolia Springs</b> Community Center			
1:30 - 2:30 p.m. - <b>Perdido Beach</b> Perdido Beach Volunteer Fire Department			
3:00 - 4:00 p.m. - <b>Orange Beach</b> City Hall			

## Millions, Billions, Trillions... Putting it in Perspective

- A million seconds is 11.5 days. A billion seconds is 32 years. A trillion seconds is 32,000 years.
- A tightly-packed stack of new \$100 bills totaling \$1 million would be about 4 feet high. A billion dollars, 4,000 feet high or equivalent to about three Sears Towers stacked on top of one another. That means a stack of \$100 bills totaling \$1 trillion would be 789 miles high or 144 Mt. Everests stacked on top of one another.
- It would take 31 years to count to a billion. It would take approximately 31,000 years to count to a trillion.
- With \$1 trillion, everyone living in America in 2008 could have 1,000 boxes of Girl Scout cookies.



# Health Care Reform

For the past several months, talk of reforming health care in our country has consumed Washington, D.C., and much of the nation.

As you may know, health care represents 17 percent of our entire economy and an ever-growing portion of the federal budget. More importantly, it is an experience all Americans share — taking our children to the doctor for a checkup, picking up prescriptions for a seasonal allergy, caring for a parent no longer able to care for themselves, or sitting by the bedside of a loved one in the hospital.

Because health care reform is so massive and at the same time so personal, here are some of my thoughts on the prospect of reform: what should be fixed, what should be left alone, and what it will take for us to get there.

Regretfully, the cost of health insurance is increasing faster than inflation, swallowing up an occasional pay raise and making it harder for businesses to compete. Medicare and many private insurers pay for procedures, rather than for outcomes, which also drive up costs.

In addition, medical liability puts lawyers between doctors and patients, increasing the cost of care and often leading doctors to practice defensive medicine rather than caring for their patients.

Finally, too many Americans are finding they cannot afford the kind of coverage they need or, sometimes, any coverage at all.

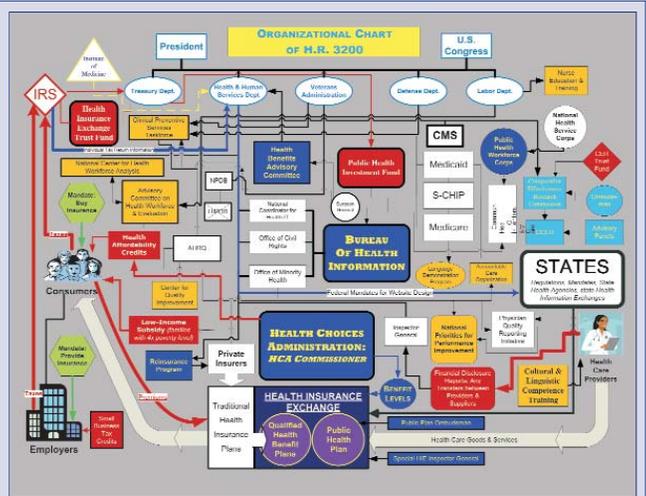
Yet, for all these problems, I still believe we have better medical care in this country than in any other country on Earth. Moreover, most of us strongly object to changing our health care or health insurance in a way that gives us less control over the choices we are allowed to make, takes away our right to choose our own doctors, or gives even more control to the federal government.

Unfortunately, that is exactly what legislation currently pending before Congress would do.

Though the House and the Senate are considering different bills, one thing they have in common is a massive expansion of the government's control over the decisions that should be made between doctors and their patients.

Simply put, a government insurance plan would be adopted to crowd out private individual and employer-sponsored plans. Moreover, it would then be federal bureaucrats, not doctors, who would decide which treatments, procedures, and prescriptions are appropriate for patients.

Rather than doing the hard work of controlling costs, the bills being considered in Congress would spend hundreds of billions for subsidies up



The above chart details the bureaucratic layers of the House majority's health care plan. The chart identifies at least 31 new federal programs, agencies, commissions, and requirements that accompany this plan.

to 400 percent of poverty — \$88,000 annual earnings for a family of four — while piling taxes and onerous mandates on the small businesses that drive our nation's economic growth.

Let me be clear — I cannot support any of the health care bills that aim to put the government in even greater control of our health care decisions. I could support health care reform that lowers costs, improves access, reforms medical liability, invests in prevention and wellness, and bends the costs curve downward rather than upward.

## A Second Opinion: Comparing Proposals

### What Republicans Propose:

- Ensure the federal government does not come between doctors and patients.
- Allow individuals to purchase health insurance on a pre-tax basis, encouraging freedom and flexibility in the 21st Century economy.
- Offer refundable tax credits for low and modest income Americans, so more people can afford health insurance.
- Expand access to health insurance regardless of preexisting conditions, ending the bias against those already in need.
- Invest in prevention and wellness, recognizing the quality of life improvements and long-term cost savings they represent.
- Allow states, small businesses, associations, and others to band together to purchase insurance.
- Enact comprehensive medical liability reform to support doctors and prevent unnecessary tests and defensive medicine.
- Preserve and expand health savings accounts so Americans can take ownership of their health care finances.

### What Democrats Propose:

- Create a highly regulated health insurance exchange where individuals can purchase government-run or private insurance.
- Raise taxes on higher-bracket income earners on a sliding scale up to more than 5 percent, which includes many small businesses.
- May require that all individuals purchase health insurance or face a tax penalty.
- May require that all, except the smallest employers, provide health insurance or face a tax penalty.
- Subsidize health insurance premiums up to 400 percent of poverty — \$88,000 per year for a family of four.
- Empower unelected bureaucrats to make decisions governing reimbursement for procedures, tests and prescriptions.

## Economic Summit a Tremendous Success



Coordinated by the Public Forum Institute, Alabama Economic Summit 2014 was a tremendous success with almost 400 leaders from throughout south-west Alabama in attendance. Pictured with me at the summit are Jonathan Ortman (of the Public Forum Institute) and Mobile Chamber of Commerce President Win Hallett.

With a troubled economy both here at home and around the globe, now is perhaps the best time to work more closely together to develop plans for how best to position our region to take the greatest advantage of the opportunities before us.

For this reason, I was pleased to host "Alabama Economic Summit 2014: Our People and Our Economy" in Mobile earlier this year.

Almost 400 public officials, educators, business leaders, community leaders and concerned citizens gathered to help determine how to position our region to make the most of our opportunities.

Governor Bob Riley, summit co-chair, kicked off the day with an overall outlook for the state's economy.

More than anything, the summit was an opportunity to highlight the strong resources and workforce Alabama has and to unify these forces under an economic strategy that will help our region lead the state into the future.

Make no mistake, the past few months — and more than likely the rest of 2009 — provide a real challenge to leaders at all levels of both business and government. That said, we cannot — actually, we must not — lose sight of the fact that we are innately blessed in Alabama with all the necessary ingredients for future economic success.

You can read the summary report of "Alabama Economic Summit 2014: Our People and Our Economy" on my website <http://bonner.house.gov>.

## Bonner Appointed to New Leadership Post

At the beginning of the 111th Congress, Minority Leader John Boehner asked me to serve as the top Republican on the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, also known as the House Ethics Committee.

In appointing me to this post, Leader Boehner said, "Jo's long record of service to the institution both as a congressional staffer and as a Member shows his dedication to the People's House. He believes strongly, as do House Republicans, that we must restore the bonds of trust between the American people and their elected leaders. He fully understands the importance of both ethics education and enforcement, and I'm pleased he has agreed to serve in this key position."

Clearly, Congress — as an institution — has earned a rather sordid reputation in recent years due, in large part, to ethical lapses of some and, unfortunately, even a few cases of illegal behavior by others.

While it is never easy to sit in judgment of one's peers, the Ethics Committee has both a responsibility and a job to do.

We have a responsibility to help the 435 members — and more than 10,000 staffers who work for the House — know what the rules are and what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior.

We also have a responsibility to make certain that if anyone is ever accused of breaking those rules, much less the law, that we investigate the matter and take appropriate action to make certain it does not happen again.

At the end of the day, it is up to all of us who work *for* the American people to help restore the trust *with* the American people. It is also of paramount importance that we make certain we are doing the people's work with integrity.

The chair of the Ethics Committee is Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren of California. Zoe and I are working closely to make certain our work gets done and the American people can have renewed confidence in the men and women they have elected to represent them.

Regarding my relationship with the chairwoman, *Roll Call* newspaper recently noted, "The lawmakers' evident rapport stands in contrast to recent years on the ethics panel, when conflict among top lawmakers at times curtailed the committee's work."



Rep. Zoe Lofgren

## 2009 1st District Art Competition Winners Announced

This year's winner of the First District High School Art Competition: *An Artistic Discovery* is Sarah Camille Chambers, a student at St. Paul's Episcopal School in Mobile. A student of art instructor Beth Compton, Camille was awarded first-place honors for her entry, "So Much for So Long, Heaven Knows."

As a result of her winning entry, Camille received a \$5,000 annual art and design scholarship. She also received round trip airfare for herself and a guardian in support of her attendance at the opening of the exhibition in Washington, D.C. Her artwork, along with other winning entries from the 50 states, will be displayed for one year in the United States Capitol building.

One of Mobile's most accomplished artists, Eugenia Foster, was the judge for this year's competition. As in previous years, all of the



Camille Chambers was presented her "Best of Show" certificate at an awards presentation at the Mobile Museum of Art.

entries were evaluated "blind," meaning no contestant information was provided in advance to the judge.

Let me encourage any young artist of high school age in Alabama's First District to consider submitting an entry for our upcoming competition. If you would like to participate for the 2009-2010 school year, you can find additional information regarding the competition on my website <http://bonner.house.gov>.

In addition to Camille, other winners from this year's competition were as follows: Kari Elgin, St. Paul's Episcopal School, second place and Thomas Kinsey, Fairhope High School, third place. Honorable mention went to Ann-Marie Babington, St. Paul's; Justin Vigor, Satsuma High; Alan Hockaday, McIntosh High; Tory Rogers, Theodore High; and Brandi Musgrove, Theodore High.

# A Timeline of This

## On the Stimulus...

“Throughout 2008, Larry Summers, the Harvard economist, built the case for a big but surgical stimulus package.... Summers was proposing bold action, but his concept came with safeguards: focus on the task at hand, prevent the usual Washington splurge and limit long-term fiscal damage. Now Barack Obama is president, and Summers has become a top economic adviser. Yet the stimulus approach that has emerged on Capitol Hill abandoned the Summers parameters.... The best course is to return to the original Summers parameters — temporary, targeted and timely — thus making the stimulus cleaner and faster. Strip out the permanent government programs. Many of them are worthy, but we can have that debate another day. Make the short term stimulus bigger.... Add in a fiscal exit strategy so the whole thing is budget neutral over the medium term. Finally, coordinate the stimulus package with plans to shore up the housing and financial markets. Until those come to life, no amount of stimulus will do any good.”

Excerpt taken from David Brooks column  
January 30, 2009

**The New York Times**

## On the mortgage bailout...

“Now that the federal government has decided to

bail out homeowners in trouble, with mortgage loans up to \$729,000, that raises some questions that ought to be asked, but are seldom being asked. Since the average American never took out a mortgage loan as big as seven hundred grand — for the very good reason that he could not afford it — why should he be forced as a taxpayer to subsidize someone else who apparently couldn’t afford it either, but who got in over his head anyway? Why should taxpayers who live in an apartment, perhaps because they did not feel that they could afford to buy a house, be forced to subsidize other people who could not afford to buy a house, but who went ahead and bought one anyway? ...What is new is the current notion of indulging people who refused to save for a rainy day or to live within their means. In politics, it is called “compassion” — which comes in both the standard liberal version and “compassionate conservatism.” The one person toward whom there is no compassion is the taxpayer.”

Excerpt from Thomas Sowell column  
March 10, 2009

**REAL CLEAR POLITICS**

## On investment in the U.S....

“Will a person or institution looking for a place to invest \$1 billion seek opportunities in the United

States, where policy decisions are deliberately increasing taxes, debt, regulations and the cost of energy, and soon will increase the cost of borrowing and hiring? Or will the investor look at, say, India. It is the least urbanized major country — 70 percent of Indians live in rural areas, 50 percent on farms — so the modernizing and productivity-enhancing movement from the countryside to the city is in its infancy. This nation of 1.2 billion people has a savings rate of 25 to 30 percent, and fewer than 20 million credit cards. Which nation, India or the United States, is apt to have the higher economic growth over the next decade?”

Excerpt taken from George F. Will column  
April 17, 2009

**The Washington Post**

## On Cap-and-Trade...

“Democratic leaders need to slow down. This proposed legislation would affect every American individual and company for generations. There’s a huge amount of money at stake: \$845 billion for the federal government in the first 10 years. Untold thousands of jobs created — or lost.”

Excerpt taken from Chicago Tribune editorial  
June 25, 2009

**Chicago Tribune**



- Historic inauguration on January 20, 2009
- Democrats control House and Senate
- Congress creates the automobile industry bailout (roll call vote #26 – I opposed)
- Senate allows second TARP bailout (roll call vote #27 – I opposed)

- \$410 billion FY 2009 omnibus appropriations bill passes Congress with over 8,500 earmarks (roll call vote #86 – I opposed)
- Administration announces earmark reforms after passage



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## JANUARY 2009

- National deficit for 2008 was \$459 billion (A national deficit occurs when the government spends more than its tax revenue.)
- National debt at \$10 trillion (The national debt is the amount the government borrows to cover its deficit.)

## FEBRUARY

- House passes \$787 billion stimulus package without Republican input (roll call vote #70 – I opposed)
- President signs stimulus bill into law

## MARCH

- House passes record FY 2010 \$3.6 trillion budget... doubling the national debt while adding more to the debt than all previous presidents combined (roll call vote #192 – I opposed)
- U.S. government spends projected revenue for the entire year strikingly early and starts borrowing
- Administration bails out Chrysler



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# Year's Headlines...

## More on Cap-and-Trade...

"As supporters of the bill admit, even if the United States cut emissions 83 percent by 2050, we would have trimmed global CO2 gases by but a few percentage points. Supporters argue that large polluting nations such as China and India would follow our lead, adopt cap-and-trade provisions of their own, and/or start investing in the new-energy innovations that would someday come on line. But that's a huge bet that could prove reckless.... Fashioned to avoid appearing like a new tax, the measure nevertheless would work like one, as the higher costs of meeting the caps get passed on to consumers. The measure risks hurting our competitiveness globally without effectively lowering global greenhouse gases."

Excerpt taken from The Denver Post editorial  
June 26, 2009

THE DENVER POST

## On Health Care reform...

"Federal spending this year is about 28 percent of gross domestic product – a figure exceeded only when Franklin Roosevelt was fighting a global war against Germany and Japan. Along the fiscal path [the administration] has chosen (according to the Congressional Budget Office) our national debt will more than double in 10 years and will amount to 82 percent of our entire economy... To pass

his health proposal this year, Obama would first need to violate his word....he pledged that "no one making less than \$250,000 a year will see any type of tax increase".... Taxing health benefits would certainly cross this very bright line and add to the public stock of cynicism.... Second, Obama would need to abandon economic common sense — adding debt to debt or new taxes to a struggling economy. Either way, it would be a sad story."

Excerpt taken from Michael Gerson column  
July 8, 2009

The Washington Post

## On another Stimulus...

"But before embarking on Stimulus III, note that only about 10 percent of Stimulus II has yet been injected into the economy. This is not the administration's fault, the administration's defenders say, because government is cumbersome, sluggish and inefficient. But this sunburst of insight comes as the administration toils to enlarge governmental control of health care, energy, finance, education, etc. The administration guesses that these government projects will do better than the Postal Service (its second-quarter loss, \$1.9 billion, was 68 percent of its losses for all of 2008) and the government's railroad (Amtrak has had 38 money-losing years,

and this year's losses are on pace to set a record)."

Excerpt taken from George F. Will column  
July 12, 2009

The Washington Post

## More on Health Care reform...

"In the middle of a recession and with rising unemployment, Democrats have been letting it leak that they want to raise U.S. tax rates higher than they've been in 30 years in order to finance government health care. Every detail isn't known, but late last week Ways and Means Chairman Charlie Rangel disclosed that his draft bill would impose a "surtax" on individuals with adjusted gross income of more than \$280,000 a year. This would hit job creators especially hard because more than six of every 10 who earn that much are small business owners, operators or investors, according to a 2007 Treasury study.... A new study by the Kaufman Foundation finds that small business entrepreneurs have led America out of its last seven post-World War II recessions. They also generate about two out of every three new jobs during a recovery. The more the [majority] reveal of their policies, the more it's clear that they prize income redistribution above all else, including job creation and economic growth."

Excerpt taken from The Wall Street Journal editorial  
July 14, 2009

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Administration submits savings proposal of just .5% of the budget  
Administration purchases GM (approximately \$50-\$70 billion)



• House passes \$100.9 billion Supplemental spending bill, plus \$108 billion in "loans" to the International Monetary Fund (roll call vote #348 – I opposed)



• U.S. Treasury forced to auction a record \$104 billion in Treasury notes to cope with America's debt obligations

• G8 meets to address climate control while China and India refuse to attend



• House and Senate majorities roll out over \$1 trillion health care reform package  
• Talk of another stimulus package underway

APRIL

MAY

JUNE

JULY

Foreign ownership of U.S. national debt: U.S. government owes China \$1.1 billion, Japan \$1.1 billion, and oil producing nations such as Saudi Arabia, the U.A.E. and Kuwait \$189.5 billion



• House Republicans propose \$375 billion in taxpayer relief to the Administration  
• House narrowly passes a cap and trade bill – the Senate has not considered the bill (roll call vote #477 – I opposed)



• U.S. sees first trillion-dollar budget deficit in world history  
• National debt increases \$2.9 billion this year alone – that is an increase of \$9,342 per person



## Making Us Proud Every Day

Our men and women in uniform continue to make us proud, even in the face of challenging circumstances in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

As you may recall, earlier this year I had the opportunity to travel to both countries to see firsthand the long-term challenges facing our military.

This was my third trip to Iraq but my first to Afghanistan. While the violence in Iraq has slowed, the same cannot be said for Afghanistan, one of the poorest and least developed nations in the world.

While in both countries, we had the opportunity to meet with troops from throughout Alabama. Our trip took place near the time of Mardi Gras, so I took reminders of home with me to share with the troops — everything from Moon Pies to Mardi Gras beads from Toomey's.

In addition to being briefed on the latest military strategy, we made time for plenty of discussions about the soldiers' families back home in the states.

While the situation in both countries remains intense, we can all be proud of what America's best have done — and continue to do — to advance the torch of freedom and liberty to people halfway around the world. May God continue to bless and watch over our soldiers and their families.



*While in Iraq and Afghanistan this past January, I handed out Moon Pies and Mardi Gras beads to Alabama troops. Pictured with me is Master Gunnery Sergeant Wiggins of Mobile.*

## Workshop Great Success

With over 220 students in attendance, my annual Workshop for High School Leaders, held at Weaver Auditorium on the campus of the University of Mobile, was a tremendous success.

The workshop provides high school government and journalism students the opportunity to question representatives from all levels of state and federal government, as well as members of the Gulf Coast broadcast and print media.

Team Focus co-founder Mike Gottfried gave the keynote address. As the CEO of the Mobile-based community outreach program that provides a positive role model to young men without a father at home, Coach Gottfried talked with the students about leadership.

WALA Fox 10's Bob Grip moderated a legislative panel with Alabama Representatives Randy Davis, Chad Fincher, Jamie Ison, and Harry Shiver.

WALA Fox 10's Lenise Ligon, WKRG TV-5's Tiffany Craig, and the *Press-Register's* Frances Coleman led the students in a discussion of the importance and impact of news organizations on today's society.

Our guests certainly helped make this year's workshop one of the best.

Please mark your calendar as next year's workshop is scheduled for Monday, January 25, 2010, from 8:00 a.m. until noon at Byrne Memorial Hall on the campus of Spring Hill College.



*Murphy High School's SGA President Travis Ritchie and Vice President Chelsea Primm joined me for my annual Workshop for High School Leaders where we had the opportunity to discuss the federal legislative process.*

## New Ship Gets Ready for Delivery



As many Gulf Coast residents have noticed, the *USS Independence* has been abuzz with activity of late, undergoing sea trials in the Gulf of Mexico and getting ready for delivery to the Navy later this fall.

Built by a team led by General Dynamics and Mobile's Austal USA, the *Independence* is the second ship in a new class of littoral combat ships. Its mission is to serve as a small assault transport ship with a variety of capabilities; two features that are especially noteworthy are her high speed (reportedly more than 40 knots) and her ability to sail close to shore.

During the sea trial phase, the *Independence* has been testing propulsion, navigation, communications and other systems. When in full service, she will have a crew of 40 sailors.

The entire state of Alabama and the Gulf Coast should feel a great sense of pride in knowing that the *Independence* — designed and built by our friends and neighbors — is the latest ship to come from Gulf waters.

The Navy is busy planning for the procurement of additional littoral combat ships in fiscal year 2010.

## A SAFER FEDERAL COURTHOUSE

Earlier this summer, the House Appropriations Committee provided a \$96 million allocation toward the construction of a new federal courthouse for downtown Mobile.

This has been a top priority for many years with both the legal community as well as leaders in the downtown redevelopment movement, as the current building, built in the 1930s, has literally outgrown its space.

This funding, if signed into law later this year as part of H.R. 3170, the Financial Services Appropriation Bill, would be the most significant step toward construction. My hope would be that construction of the new courthouse would commence sometime in the next couple of years.

Currently, plans call for the old courthouse to continue serving the people of south Alabama in a different capacity once the new federal courthouse is built nearby.

Upon learning of this funding, Chief Judge Callie V.S. Granade of the Southern District of Alabama said, "The judges and staff of the Court are excited and grateful about the possibility for funding of our new courthouse. It will cure our current security concerns and difficulties occasioned by an aging building, while providing downtown Mobile with a building that the public can use and enjoy."



*Pictured above is Mobile's current federal courthouse which was originally built in 1932.*

## Is Another Stimulus Bill Just Around the Corner?

When the Administration and Democrat leaders of Congress promised earlier this year that their \$787 billion stimulus bill — which actually will cost more than \$1.3 trillion when you factor in the interest we are paying on this borrowed money — would “create jobs immediately” and would also keep unemployment from rising above 8 percent, there were naturally many skeptics.

Unfortunately, as this newsletter was going to press, there were a whole host of new rumors that another, perhaps even bigger, stimulus bill was being considered when Congress returns from the August district work period. In recent weeks, both Vice President Joe Biden and House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer indicated there might be a need for another stimulus.

For many of us, it is hard to imagine how anyone can actually believe that borrowing more money — only to create a bigger federal bureaucracy — is going to help turn around our country’s ailing economy.

Let’s face it...the American people are hurting, and there is growing angst that I have not witnessed in my entire adult life.

Even here in south Alabama, people are concerned that — while there are some parts of the First District which are better off than the rest of the country — five of the six counties in Alabama’s First District have a higher unemployment rate than the national average.

The bottom line is this: there is no guarantee that we have seen the end of these staggering job losses, either here at home or throughout the rest of the country.

Nationwide, almost half a million more jobs were lost in June, driving unemployment to 9.5 percent — its highest level in almost three decades. Sadly, there is every reason to believe this number will climb even higher in the coming months.



*“Jo Bonner is one of the conservatives I can count on when we fight for working families in Washington. He has been a watchdog for wasteful government spending and has ensured*

*that future generations of Americans aren’t paying for pet projects. Jo has also taken on the role of ensuring that Members of Congress conduct themselves with the highest level of integrity in his role on the Ethics Committee. Residents of the First District of Alabama should be proud of the job Jo Bonner is doing for them.”*

— Texas Congressman Jeb Hensarling  
Chair, Republican Study Committee, 110th Congress

While it is possible I could have supported a stimulus bill back in February that would have lowered taxes and invested money in badly-needed infrastructure projects — two things which would have actually created jobs and cost less than the previous stimulus bill — now it is hard to imagine a scenario whereby any stimulus bill could be written that would get my vote.

As you know, I have worked hard to earn the reputation for being the most fiscally conservative member of our Alabama Delegation.

Whether it is the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB), which has consistently ranked me as the most conservative member of Congress from Alabama — and repeatedly awarded me the prestigious “Guardian of Small Business” award for my work in Congress — or the U.S. Chamber of Congress, which scores my lifetime voting record with a solid 94 percent, you do not get this recognition by going out and supporting one big, wasteful government program after another.

Rest assured, we will keep you posted if a another stimulus package does come before the House this year. If it does, do not be surprised if your congressman is once again leading the effort to defeat it if there is even more spending, more debt and higher taxes.

## What? An Earmark that Costs No Money!

We have all heard the old saying, “that would take an act of Congress” to get something done. Well, recently, our office had an opportunity to be involved in just such an act!

It started when Atlantic Marine, a Jacksonville, Florida, based company, which has enjoyed a long and proud presence in Mobile, contacted our office with a “little problem” at its Mobile shipyard.

It seems that last year, an official with Customs and Border Patrol decided to classify the giant drydock as a “vessel.”

For those not familiar with shipyards, a drydock is used for the construction, maintenance and repair of ships, boats and other watercraft. It has a narrow basin which allows a load to be floated and then drained. This, in turn, allows for the work to be done on a dry platform.

While the drydock itself resides in the water, there is no engine room, cabin or passenger quarters. To suggest it is a “vessel” in the conventional sense leaves out one important fact — you cannot ski behind it, take it down to Dauphin Island for the day, or do anything other than perform construction and repair work on it in a shipyard.

Yet, because someone, somewhere deep in one of the layers of federal bureaucracy deemed this drydock a “vessel,” it became necessary for me to secure an earmark in the Supplemental Appropriations bill to...get ready for this...allow this com-

pany to move a floating drydock that it has owned for 25 years from one location within its yard to another.

For the record, Atlantic Marine is building three petroleum tankers for an energy company in Texas, and in order to complete work on its first order, they needed to move the drydock just 100 yards to launch the newly built ship.

So, in case you are ever asked for an example of a Congressional earmark that did not cost any money but kept 350 jobs at a local shipyard, now you have a story you can share!

Special thanks goes to Senator Shelby for his assistance in keeping this language in the House-Senate conference before the bill was signed into law by the president.



**Shown above is the drydock that required an act of Congress to be allowed to be moved from one point to another within the same Mobile shipyard.**

# Earmarks 101: What You Should Know

Each year, Congress considers about a dozen appropriation bills, each of which provides funding for numerous activities, such as national defense, education and homeland security, as well as general government operations.

As you may know, last year I gained a seat on the Appropriations Committee and at that time, committed to help reform the appropriations process that has been the subject of so much confusion and controversy in recent years.

As has been said before, I do not believe that a career bureaucrat serving in the executive branch, who has never been to Alabama and has no real understanding of the needs of any particular region outside of the bureaucracy of Washington, D.C., can make a better determination as to how to spend your hard-earned tax dollars than someone who has served in Congress and knows his district's needs and capabilities and, most importantly, who is willing to follow specific standards in an open and transparent process.

Additionally, I do not believe the effect of earmark reform should simply be to provide larger pools of funds for unelected Washington bureaucrats. Keep in mind, not all earmarks are tainted, wasteful and ineffective...in fact, most are not. That said, I do not support unjustified or self-serving projects — nor should any congressman.

Moreover, it remains Congress' constitutional responsibility to direct federal spending.

Let's be clear...earmarks make up less than one percent of the annual budget. Moreover, the executive branch — not just Congress — promotes certain priority projects through the appropriation process as well.

While the number of earmarks and the amount of funding provided is down con-

siderably from just a few years ago, we can all be pleased that Congress has responded to the taxpayers' demands for more transparency and accountability. For instance, last year, my office voluntarily posted on our website my FY 2009 reform policy (which became a model for many offices), a list of projects requested by me, and a list of projects which received funding.

Recently, the entire House followed suit, and such a posting has now become a requirement for all members.

For the record, this year more than 172 different project requests were submitted to my office by various entities (towns, universities, etc.). Of these, we recommended 45 priority projects to be considered for federal funding. Many of these, however, might not receive any funding at all as they are further vetted by the Appropriations Committee and the relevant federal agency.

Rest assured of one thing...our office will continue to set an example of full accountability and transparency, as well as to self-impose a series of additional requirements that we believe will set a standard for a more responsible process. Accordingly, we will continue to post our policy, deadlines, and application forms in January or February (as the annual appropriation process begins) on my website <http://bonner.house.gov>.



*The state-of-the-art Mitchell Cancer Institute at the University of South Alabama is funded in part through federal appropriations. The center is designed to treat as many as 4,000 patients per year and is the first academic cancer research institute in the upper Gulf Coast.*

## Legislative News in Brief...

### FEDERAL RESERVE TRANSPARENCY

The Federal Reserve, our country's central bank and a major regulator, plays a large and growing role in nationwide — and worldwide — economic and fiscal matters. The worldwide recession, and the government's efforts to combat it, have only increased its influence. Despite this important role, the bank's operations are kept mostly undisclosed from the public. I have cosponsored a bill, the Federal Reserve Transparency Act of 2009, which would improve disclosure requirements and bring the workings of the Federal Reserve to light.



### FREEDOM OF CHOICE ACT

Since the beginning of this Congress, we have received hundreds — if not thousands — of letters and phone calls urging my opposition to the Freedom of Choice Act. This bill, introduced in the 110th Congress but, so far, not reintroduced in the 111th Congress, would codify *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court decision upholding a woman's choice to abort a pregnancy before fetal viability. As you may know, I am strongly opposed to abortion except in cases of rape or incest or to save the life of the mother. You can be assured we will continue to remember the thoughts from those of you who have contacted my office on this important issue.



### CARD CHECK LEGISLATION

One of the most contentious legislative issues this Congress has been the fight to maintain the secret ballot process in union elections. The Employee Free Choice Act, which I voted against in the 110th Congress, would allow a union to organize simply when a majority of workers sign cards — a process which could expose workers to undue pressure. We have a time-honored tradition in this country recognizing the importance of a secret ballot. In fact, you



elect your representatives and senators... even the governor and president... using a secret ballot. If it works for America — and it does — then I see no reason why unions should need to use any other means to organize.

### GUANTANAMO BAY PRISONERS

Since the beginning of the global war on terror, detaining enemy combatants captured on the battlefield has been an essential strategy which, in turn, has helped curb our adversaries' ability to carry out new acts of terrorism. President Obama's decision to close the Navy's detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, has forced Congress to consider other options for detaining these dangerous terrorists. In the House's consideration of FY 2010 funding for the Department of Justice, I supported an amendment to cut off funds for the closure of the prison at Guantanamo Bay, ensuring the prisoners will not be transferred to a prison or military brig inside our country. Though the amendment passed, we must continue to look for other opportunities to prevent the transfer — and possible release — of dangerous enemy combatants on American soil.



### NEW ALABAMA REPRESENTATIVES

The Alabama Delegation welcomed two new members this year — Congressman Bobby Bright of the Second District and Congressman Parker Griffith of the Fifth District. Both Bobby, the former mayor of Montgomery, and Parker, a former state senator from Huntsville, have jumped right into the mix; it should come as no real surprise to anyone that they are working closely with the other members of our delegation in making sure we are all putting the interests of our state at the top of the list as, together, we represent Alabama in the "People's House."



Rep. Bobby Bright



Rep. Parker Griffith

## Alabama Veterans Visit WWII Memorial

This past May, the inaugural Honor Flight South Alabama took 92 men and women to Washington, D.C., to visit the National World War II Memorial.

Founded by the South Alabama Veterans Council, Honor Flight South Alabama is a very



*It was an honor to visit with veterans from southwest Alabama at the National World War II Memorial in Washington. Most of these men and women were seeing this memorial – built in their honor – for the very first time.*

special organization whose mission is to fly heroes from World War II who live in Mobile, Baldwin, Washington, Clarke, Monroe, Covington, and Escambia counties to see their national memorial.

Honor Flight provides for many veterans their first — and perhaps only — opportunity to see the National World War II Memorial, which honors their service and sacrifice.



The next Honor Flight is scheduled for Saturday, September 12, 2009. For more information on this special organization, you can visit their website, [www.honorflightsa.com](http://www.honorflightsa.com), or call (251) 431-8621.

May we never forget the valiant deeds — and tremendous sacrifices — of these brave men and women. Special thanks goes to the organizers, volunteers and donors who helped make Honor Flight South Alabama a reality.

## Congratulations 2009 Academy Nominees!

One of my greatest privileges as a Member of Congress is to nominate qualified young men and women from Alabama's First District to our United States Service Academies. As any student of American history knows, the five U.S. Service Academies have produced some of the finest leaders the world has ever known.

This year, I was honored to nominate 18 young men and women for the academies' consideration. Not surprisingly, many have already received their appointments to begin their college careers this summer.

For those south Alabama students interested in attending a service academy, it is never too soon to begin the nomination process. Students who have recently completed their junior year in high school are eligible to apply for a nomination now, and the nomination file must be completed in my office by December 1, 2009.

For more information, please contact Brooks Chew in my Mobile district office at (251) 690-2811 or (800) 288-8721. Information is also available on my website <http://bonner.house.gov>.

Congratulations to this year's nominees: Justin Avery of Mobile, Davidson High School; Wes Collins of Mobile, McGill-Toolen Catholic High School; Bill Davis of Mobile, University of South



*This spring, we hosted a dinner in honor of the students I nominated to our nation's service academies at Ed's Seafood Shed in Spanish Fort.*

Alabama; William Dorriety of Fairhope, Bayside Academy; Haleigh Fulmer of Saraland, Satsuma High School; Tommy Hamel of Wilmer, Murphy High School; Justin Hasley of Daphne, Daphne High School; Kat Kuklish of Lillian, Pensacola Catholic High School; Max Manley of Robertsdale, Robertsdale High School; Zach Moody of Mobile, Davidson High School; Austin Nash of Mobile, Baker High School; Gary Newton of Mobile, Baker High School; Paloma Perez of Irvington, McGill-Toolen Catholic High School; Nathan Petty of Mobile, Murphy High School; Tim Powell of Mobile, Baker High School; Fields Stallworth of Monroeville, Monroe Academy; Adam Williams of Fairhope, Fairhope High School; Torin Williams of Mobile, Ben C. Rain High School.

## Alabama Native Nominated to be Next Surgeon General

In mid-July, Alabama's own Dr. Regina Benjamin was nominated by President Obama to be the next U.S. surgeon general.

Dr. Benjamin is an honorable choice for this post, and I could not be more proud that one of south Alabama's very best was tapped by the president to become "America's doctor."

The post has been used previously — most notably by Dr. C. Everett Koop, President Reagan's surgeon general — to help advance public health policy. For instance, Dr. Koop was credited with helping educate the American people regarding health measures that helped stem the spread of AIDS.

There are few physicians anywhere who have earned more respect and admiration from her peers — as well as the lasting gratitude from her community and state — than Dr. Regina Benjamin.

With determination and self-sacrifice, she rebuilt her clinic in Bayou La Batre a number of times after hurricanes and a fire destroyed it. She



*President Barack Obama announces Bayou La Batre physician, Regina Benjamin, as his nominee for surgeon general in the Rose Garden of the White House. (AP photo)*

sees a challenge — and she's seen many in her years of practicing medicine in south Mobile County — as an opportunity waiting to be explored.

While her nomination must go through the confirmation process of the U.S. Senate, one thing is clear... the president did himself — and his administration — proud with the appointment of Dr. Benjamin for this prestigious post.

## Interns Gain Valuable Experience



*Our first group of summer interns (l to r) Caroline Crawford, Charlie Pond, Louise Crow, Kate LaBorde, and Tyler Tait worked with me in my Washington office.*

This summer 19 young Alabamians interned on my staff in Washington and Mobile. Each student completed a four week internship and assisted in the daily operations of the office.

Fourteen of the students spent the summer in our nation's capital working in my Washington office where they researched issues and conducted tours of the U.S. Capitol. These students also had opportunities to attend congressional hearings, lectures, and seminars. In addition to shadowing staff on district visits, our five district interns saw firsthand how our Mobile office assists individuals cut through red tape so often experienced when dealing with federal agencies.

Our outstanding interns this summer were Alex Cika, University of South Alabama; Emily Collins, Auburn University; Caroline Crawford, College of Charleston; Lister Crosby, University of Alabama; Louise Crow, University of Alabama; Bonita Dungan, Troy University; Miriam Fry, University of Alabama; Mark Harris, University of Southern Mississippi; Mary Katherine Holder, Samford University; Kate LaBorde, Spring Hill College; Meg McCrummen, University of Alabama; Wyatt Montgomery, University of Alabama; Ashley Nichols, Auburn University; Jessica Pettis, University of Alabama; Charlie Pond, University of Alabama; Chase Schmidt, Auburn University; Jessica Sheppard, University of Alabama; Erin Shipley, University of Alabama; and Tyler Tait, University of Mississippi.

If you are from Baldwin, Clarke, Escambia, Mobile, Monroe, or Washington County and have completed at least one semester of college, you are eligible to apply for a congressional internship.

My office will begin accepting applications this fall for the summer of 2010. For more information, please contact Suzannah Weeks in my Washington D.C. office at (202) 225-4931 or visit the student section of my website <http://bonner.house.gov>.

## New Washington Office

As a reminder, my Washington staff and I recently moved to our new office in room 2236 of the Rayburn House Office Building.

Following each election cycle, a number of offices become available due to retirements and lost elections. Members, if they choose, can participate in a lottery and are able to draw a number to determine in what order they can choose from the available offices.

This time, with increased seniority and a little luck, I was one of the first in my class to have the opportunity to select a new office.

As you may know, we have been based in the Cannon House Office Building for the past six years, and this new office in the Rayburn Building provides my staff with a little more elbow room — 70 additional square feet to be exact; however, in Washington, space — no matter how little — is a premium.

If you or your family are planning a visit to Washington anytime soon, please note our new office location. The D.C. phone number, (202) 225-4931, remains the same.



## Social Security: The Economy's Impact on Benefits

Earlier this year, the trustees of Social Security announced their estimate that, unless the economy rallies significantly before the end of 2009, there would not be a positive cost of living adjustment for either 2010 or 2011.

In the months since, rising unemployment and a lack of significant economic growth have made this estimate appear more and more likely. Let me share with you some facts about the estimate and what it may mean for seniors across south Alabama.

You may already know that the Social Security Administration provides updates to Social Security benefit checks — called cost of living adjustments or COLAs — based on a formula which is centered on the consumer price index (CPI). Automatic COLAs for Social Security recipients began in 1975, and there has not been a year since when there was not some cost of living adjustment, if even a modest one.

*...seniors can expect their Social Security checks to maintain their current amounts in both 2010 and 2011.*

In years when the CPI increases, the COLA will be positive, resulting in a larger monthly check for beneficiaries. For instance, the COLA for 2009 was 5.8 percent, the largest single-year increase since 1982, which reflected rising prices on the wide variety of consumer goods making up the CPI market basket.

Unfortunately, the global recession and the corresponding decline in the CPI have been sufficient to prompt the Social Security trustees to estimate that there will be no positive COLA adjustment for the next two years.

If current economic conditions hold, which most experts predict they will, seniors can expect their Social Security checks to maintain their current amounts in both 2010 and 2011.

As you may know, the COLA was intended to provide seniors with increased purchasing power to align with increasing prices. When prices decline, the COLA does not increase, but by law, it cannot decrease either.

While, traditionally, Congress has had no role in adjusting COLAs, it is not unrealistic to expect that many Social Security recipients will have additional questions later this year. Rest assured, as your member of Congress, I will continue to do all that is possible to promote economic growth...not only for the benefit of our seniors, but for everyone in south Alabama and throughout the country.

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