

Jo Bonner



THE WASHINGTON CYBER REPORT

2236 Rayburn House Office Building ★ Washington, DC 20515 ★ (202) 225-4931 ★ March 2010

ANNUAL WORKSHOP FOR HIGH SCHOOL LEADERS TREMENDOUS SUCCESS



Over 250 high school students from South Alabama participated in my workshop for high school leaders. Students were afforded an opportunity to question local journalists, judges and state legislators about their roles in our society.

On February 22, high school scholars from throughout South Alabama attended my annual First Congressional District workshop for high school leaders at Spring Hill College. The workshop brings students and community leaders together to discuss current affairs. My thanks go out to our local experts for their participation in this year's workshop.

The Judicial Panel included the Hon. Kenyen Brown, U.S. Attorney, Southern District of Alabama; the Hon. Kristi DuBose, U.S. District Judge, Southern District of Alabama; and the Hon. Edmond Naman, Juvenile Court Judge, Mobile County.

Filling out the Legislative Panel was Sen. L.D.M. "Trip" Pittman, Alabama State Senate; Rep. Jamie Ison, Alabama House of Representatives; and Rep. James Buskey, Alabama House of Representatives. Bob Grip, News Anchor, WALA FOX 10, served as our moderator.

The Media Panel consisted of George Talbot, Political Editor, Press Register; Tiffany Craig, Investigative Reporter, WKRG News 5; and Lenise Ligon, News Anchor, WALA Fox 10.

HEALTH CARE FIASCO

"Sadly, instead of listening to the American people, the Democrat Majority – at least most of them – have chosen to tune the people out...to ignore the angst, the fear, the frustration and the anger and somehow hope this will all just go away. Let me assure you...it will not!"



Sunday night, in defiance of the will of the American people, the U.S. House passed the controversial \$1.2 trillion Senate health care bill by a mere four votes.

On Tuesday, the president signed the 2,700-page, purely partisan bill into law. I joined 211 of my colleagues in voting against this disaster of a bill, and even though it has become law, I am committed to undoing its infringements on our individual rights.

Like most of you, I am outraged at the audacity of the Democrat leadership and the president in forcing through this overreaching, power-grabbing legislation which a clear majority of the American people opposed and continue to oppose.

On the eve of the House vote, I was granted five minutes to speak on the House floor against the health care bill. As I noted in my floor speech, common sense tells us that with a bill this big — and with so many last-minute deals being made — that there are going to be a lot more angry people throughout the entire country when all the details of this legislation become known in the coming weeks and months.

There isn't enough space here to list all the problems with the new health care law, but the \$500 billion in cuts to Medicare, including the popular Medicare Advantage program, which threaten seniors' benefits; massive new taxes on small businesses and individuals; the unprecedented federal mandate that every American buy health insurance or face increasing fines; and the possibility of taxpayer-funded abortions, are among the most glaring.

I give my support to state efforts to challenge the constitutionality of this flawed health care law, and I join with my Republican colleagues in the House in fighting for a reversal of this irresponsible legislation and for the implementation of true health care reforms that Americans will support.

KC-X TANKER RFP STILL BEARS WATCHING

All of South Alabama was deeply disappointed when Northrop Grumman recently announced it would not offer a bid in the Air Force's \$35 billion KC-X aerial tanker competition. We all know from the previous competition, which was fairly won by Northrop Grumman/EADS, then nullified, that our home team had the very best plane.

The departure of Northrop-Grumman from the competition is an even bigger disappointment to our military who would have gained a superior aerial tanker, and for the taxpayer, who would have gotten the best value.

Given the fact that the Pentagon deliberately created an unlevel playing field in the new bidding process — disadvantaging Northrop Grumman over its lone competitor, Boeing — it was not surprising that the company chose to withdraw.

The implications of Northrop Grumman's inability to bid on the massive new contract go beyond local jobs. This sets the stage for more such noncompetitive awards, which rob our military of the most capable weapons systems while also denying the best value for our taxpayers' investment.

In 2008, candidate Barack Obama called for change in government, including ensuring "that federal contracts over \$25,000 are competitively bid." Furthermore, on March 4, 2009, President Obama issued a memorandum ordering his agency chiefs to avoid no-bid federal contracts. With such clear orders, one wonders how the Department of Defense could effectively award a \$35 billion sole source contract less than a year later?

In early February, I wrote President Obama asking him to intervene in the competition to guarantee fairness. I also asked him to consider an alternative approach — a dual source award where both contractors could share in the construction of the new tankers.

At the time of this writing, EADS, Northrop-Grumman's partner in the original tanker competition, has asked the Pentagon for a time extension. It is not yet known if the Pentagon will grant the extension, or if it does, whether EADS will submit a bid of its own.

The Defense Department should take advantage of this opportunity to abide by the president's order to avoid no-bid contracts.



NEW WEBSITE UNVEILED

For the latest news about my activities in Congress on your behalf, please visit my new website at www.bonner.house.gov. You can watch videos of my floor speeches and also email my office via the new site. Give it a look and let me know what you think.

BRINGING ALABAMA TO OUR MILITARY IN AFGHANISTAN

In mid March, I travelled to Afghanistan to visit our military who are bravely standing up for our freedom. This was my second opportunity to visit Afghanistan and witness the progress being made on the front line of America's battle with Al Qaeda and their allies.



After having breakfast with Army and Navy personnel from Alabama, I was pleased to present them with some reminders of home — Alabama and Auburn t-shirts.

During the weekend trip, I was briefed by General Stanley McChrystal, the commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, as well as the U.S. Ambassador Karl Eikenberry, on local conditions and the start-up of the 30,000-troop surge to drive the terrorists out of the country.

While there, I also visited with Alabama troops stationed in the Afghan capital — presenting them with Alabama and Auburn t-shirts and thanking them for their service to our country.

The men and women of our military are absolutely dedicated to the success of their mission, which is to protect us. We, in return, must continue to give them the tools and support they need to get the job done.

From the mailbox...

Dear Congressman Bonner,

I would like to express how much my class and I enjoyed the Leadership Workshop. It was very thought provoking and informative. It led to an excellent class discussion that amazed me at how much my students had learned. I truly believe Congressman Bonner's Workshop will encourage my students to research and examine political issues more thoroughly, thereby making them more productive citizens. I know they will vote more carefully and wisely now. Thank you for allowing us access to such a terrific learning experience.

Sincerely,

Julia Clements

*T.R. Miller High School
Brewton, AL*

