

# Jo Bonner



## THE WASHINGTON CYBER REPORT

2236 Rayburn House Office Building ★ Washington, DC 20515 ★ (202) 225-4931 ★ January/February 2012

### AUSTAL ROLLS OUT SECOND LCS



*Austal USA recently launched its second littoral combat ship, USS Coronado (LCS 4), into the Mobile River alongside the Joint High Speed Vessel, USS Spearhead (JHSV 1). The Spearhead, which is also undergoing final outfitting, was launched in September. This view shows the new LCS being moved out of the Austal assembly bay. The USS Spearhead (JHSV 1) is moored to the right.*

Mobile ship builder Austal USA is busy building out two classes of high-tech shallow water vessels for the U.S. Navy. For the first time, both types of ships are docked side-by-side in front of Austal's assembly facility on the downtown waterfront.

On January 11, Austal USA rolled out its second littoral combat ship, the USS Coronado (LCS 4). The Coronado was christened on January 14. The vessel will soon undergo sea trials before it is officially handed over to the Navy.

In December 2010, the Navy announced the award of a ten ship LCS contract to Austal. However, Pentagon spending cuts announced recently by Defense Secretary Leon Panetta call for a two ship reduction of the total number of future LCSs procured. The Navy's long-term plan will likely be adjusted down from a 55 ship purchase to reflect the two vessel reduction. New contracts will need to be awarded to both contrac-

tors once the first 20 vessels are complete. Austal and Lockheed Martin's plant in Wisconsin have separate Navy contracts to build 10 LCSs over five years. To date, both manufacturers have completed two ships each.

Austal's other Navy ship, the joint high speed vessel, USS Spearhead (JHSV 1), was launched in September. The Spearhead is Austal's first JHSV in a production run that could be capped at 10 ships if proposed Pentagon budget cuts stand. Austal has two other JHSVs currently under construction with another seven vessels to be built along the Mobile River.

Meanwhile, the administration's proposed defense cuts are just the first step in the military's budget approval process. Congress will fully review the new Pentagon budget request in the coming weeks and months and will appropriate funding at some point this summer.

### APPLY NOW FOR SUMMER INTERNSHIPS



*Posing in front of the U.S. Capitol with my August 2011 interns.*

With the New Year comes the opportunity for interested South Alabama college students to apply for a summer internship in my congressional office.

If you have completed at least one semester of college, you are eligible to apply for a congressional internship.

As a congressional intern, your duties will vary widely from assisting staff in opening and processing mail and taking phone calls to researching and responding to legislative inquiries to attending committee hearings.

You will also have the opportunity to tour one of the most fascinating cities in the world – Washington, DC. The hands-on experience you will receive as a congressional intern should prove valuable, whatever your future career path.

The deadline to submit your application for a summer 2012 congressional internship is February 17. You can contact my office to request an application or visit my web site ([bonner.house.gov](http://bonner.house.gov)) to download a copy. You may also call my office for more information at 1-800-288-8721.

## CONTINUING FIGHT TO REPEAL OBAMACARE

The battle to repeal Obamacare continues on multiple fronts in the House of Representatives. This past week I voted for legislation that passed the House to repeal a major provision of President Obama's health care law.

On February 1, 2012, the House voted to terminate a new long-term care entitlement program, known as the Community Living Assistance Services and Supports (CLASS) program. CLASS was originally included in the president's health care bill to help disguise part of Obamacare's massive cost.

CLASS's up-front infusion of revenues into Obamacare masked as much as \$80 billion of the true price tag of the controversial new health care law. However, CLASS has itself been discredited in recent months. Last October, Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius conceded that CLASS was not financially solvent.

CLASS was a ticking time bomb from the beginning. In October 2009, the Democrat chairman of the Senate Budget Committee described CLASS as "a Ponzi scheme of the first order, the kind of thing Bernie Madoff would be proud of."

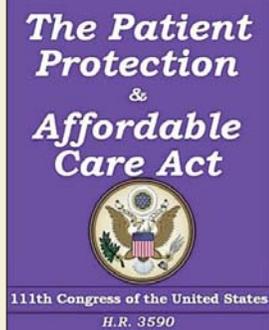
However, admitting that CLASS is a failure would undermine the president's health care law, so the Obama administration has taken no action to formally end the failed CLASS program.

Wednesday's vote to kill the CLASS provision of Obamacare comes a little over a year after I joined the House in voting to repeal Obamacare outright.

I opposed Obamacare when it originally passed the House in 2009 and 2010, and I support House Republican efforts to defund it and continue to press for its total repeal.

### ***"Repeal and Replace"***

I favor replacing Obamacare with long-term needed reforms including offering Americans the ability to purchase health insurance across state lines, expanding access to health savings accounts, and offering the right to coverage regardless of pre-existing conditions. Furthermore, I support measures to lower health care costs, including medical liability reform.



## KEN FEINBERG'S BOOKS FINALLY UNDER AUDIT

In response to my congressional request for an independent review, the Justice Department has appointed an auditor to conduct a thorough audit of the oil spill claims processing facility funded by BP and run by claims czar Ken Feinberg. The audit is expected to be completed in March.

The Gulf oil spill took a high toll on businesses and workers in our region. Tens of thousands of individuals and businesses from Alabama submitted claims to Mr. Feinberg's Gulf Coast Claims Facility and many have expressed frustration at the slow pace and inconsistent decisions rendered by the GCCF.

In the months after Mr. Feinberg took over as claims administrator, then-Governor Bob Riley and I held multiple meetings with him over the GCCF's poor performance. Each time Mr. Feinberg promised improvements, which never materialized. Over a year ago, I asked the Justice Department to exercise greater oversight over the GCCF to ensure claimants were being treated fairly.

Last year, I was successful in including language in the House Commerce, Justice, Science appropriations report requiring an independent audit of the GCCF. When Attorney General Eric Holder visited Baldwin County last June, I had the opportunity to press him again on the audit. My language was adopted in legislation funding the Justice Department that was approved by Congress in November and signed into law.

To be sure, Alabamians are not the only ones who have experienced difficulty with the GCCF. Attorneys General in other Gulf states have voiced concern over the lack of transparency in Mr. Feinberg's claims system. A Louisiana federal judge even questioned Mr. Feinberg's independence from BP, which not only provides the funds for the claims payments but also covers Mr. Feinberg's salary as the GCCF administrator.

Gulf Coast residents and businesses, which suffered economic injury from the unprecedented BP oil spill, believed GCCF administrator Ken Feinberg when he assured us that legitimate claims would be paid. A year and a half after the oil spill, the people deserve no less than a full accounting of the GCCF's claims process. Let's open the books.



## ROBOTICS TEAM VISITING THE WHITE HOUSE

*The Monroeville Jr. High robotics team was recently selected to participate in the White House Presidential Science Fair on February 7. The science-minded Monroeville students have racked up awards in state and regional robotic engineering competitions, catching the attention of the Oval Office. During their DC visit, the Monroeville Jr. High team members will set up an exhibit in the White House East Wing and take questions from the President. In January I had the honor of visiting with three members of the Monroeville Jr. High robotic team, (l-r) Desmond Stevens, Titus Walker and Morgan Ard.*

## NO BUDGET, NO PAY FOR LAWMAKERS



Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid would probably like to forget January 24, 2012. That day marked the 1,000th day since the Senate, under his leadership, last passed an annual budget resolution. How long is 1,000 days? It is twice the time that was needed to build the Pentagon or to draft and approve the U.S. Constitution.

Each year the House and Senate are required to pass budget resolutions, which serve as blueprints of annual federal discretionary spending levels that Congress will eventually appropriate. Without a budget framework, the process of agreeing upon a final budget is more difficult.

Simply put, passing a budget is a basic duty of the House and Senate and it is unacceptable when either fails to perform this most fundamental of responsibilities. Yet, that hasn't seemed to bother the Senate leadership. Rather than having to face tough budget choices, they have chosen to shirk their responsibility.

I recently cosponsored new legislation aimed at punishing Congress for failing to pass a budget on time. The "Do Your Job Act" (HR 3799) would force lawmakers to suffer in their wallets for failing to approve a budget by May 15 of each year.

Specifically, the legislation withholds the pay and operating expenses of Members of the House and Senate until they fulfill their duties to pass a budget resolution.

The House passed its FY12 budget resolution last April and will soon tackle its FY13 budget. If the House can do its work on time there is no excuse for the Senate to take nearly three years to fulfill its duty to write a budget.

## BONNER VOTES TO FREEZE CONGRESSIONAL PAY

On February 1, 2012, I voted for legislation to freeze the salaries of Members of Congress and their staff as well as civilian federal workers through 2013. The pay freeze legislation passed the House by a 309 to 117 margin and now advances to the Senate.

Members of Congress and federal employees have not received a cost of living raise in two years. The legislation would extend the pay freeze for another year.

At a time when the country is suffering from sustained, record-high unemployment and families and small businesses have reduced their expenses, it is only fair that Congress and the federal government also exercise restraint.

## SENATE BLOCKS OVER A DOZEN HOUSE-PASSED JOBS BILLS

The House of Representatives has been very busy passing more than two dozen bills designed to promote economic growth and job creation. Sadly, Senator Harry Reid has stopped each of these bills at the Senate door. There they sit as he and the president repeat the refrain of a Do-Nothing Congress.

The House's record clearly speaks for itself. This Congress, we've passed a budget – something the Senate has yet to do for 1,000 days – and we've passed each of these jobs bills with bipartisan support. Exactly who is "doing nothing?"



*I recently visited with Raymond McCaffrey of Quality Valve, Inc. in Mobile to discuss the financial burden and uncertainty government regulations place on small businesses.*

- Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act (HR 872)
- Energy Tax Prevention Act (HR 910)
- Disapproval of FCC's Net Neutrality Regulations (HJ Res 37)
- Clean Water Cooperative Federalism Act (HR 2018)
- Consumer Financial Protection & Soundness Improvement Act (HR 1315)
- Protecting Jobs from Government Interference Act (HR 2587)
- Transparency in Regulatory Analysis of Impacts on the Nation Act (HR 2401)
- Cement Sector Regulatory Relief Act (HR 2681)
- EPA Regulatory Relief Act (HR 2250)
- Coal Residuals Reuse and Management Act (HR 2273)
- Workforce Democracy and Fairness Act (HR 3094)
- Regulatory Flexibility Improvement Act (HR 527)
- Regulatory Accountability Act (HR 3010)
- REINS Act (HR 10)
- Farm Dust Regulation Prevention Act (HR 1633)
- Middle Class Tax Relief & Job Creation Act (HR 3630)
- Southeast Arizona Resource Utilization & Conservation Act (HR 1904)
- Small Company Capital Formation Act (HR 1070)
- Small Banks' Access to Capital Act (HR 1965)
- Entrepreneur Access to Capital Act (HR 2930)
- Access to Capital for Job Creators Act (HR 2940)
- Fairness for High-Skilled Immigrants Act (HR 3012)
- Restarting American Offshore Leasing Now Act (HR 1230)
- Putting the Gulf of Mexico Back to Work Act (HR 1229)
- Reversing President Obama's Offshore Moratorium Act (HR 1231)
- Jobs and Energy Permitting Act (HR 2021)
- North American-Made Energy Security Act (HR 1938)