

# Alabama's First District

# CONGRESSMAN JO BONNER

## THE WASHINGTON REPORT



315 Cannon House Office Building ★ Washington, DC 20515 ★ (202) 225-4931 ★ Summer 2006



*Dear Friend,*

With so many developing — and late-breaking — storylines occurring around the globe, this edition of “The Washington Report” reminds me a lot of Charles Dickens — *these are the best of times and*

*the worst of times.*

Locally, the economy throughout southwest Alabama is strong, and in some communities, it is better than it has been in decades.

And yet, as reminded recently by a constituent who lives in Brewton but has to travel 120 miles round-trip per day to work in Florida, your leaders at all levels of government can't rest until every person who wants a high-paying job with good benefits can find one here at home.

That said, “Help Wanted” signs are a common sight in Mobile and Baldwin counties and even in the more rural areas of Clarke, Escambia, Monroe and Washington counties. The area's unemployment rate is equal to — or better than — the national unemployment rate of 4.6 percent, which is a first in recent memory for all six counties of the First Congressional District (See Chart, Page 2).

Statewide, Alabama's unemployment rate of 3.6 percent continues to blaze a trail of opportunity. This represents the lowest unemployment rate since Alabama became a state in 1819. More than 85,000 jobs have been created in Alabama during the past 3½ years.

And with the strong possibility of even more new jobs coming to the area in aircraft manufacturing and repair, shipbuilding, high-tech and medical research, and at the ever-expanding state docks, the outlook for the foreseeable future is bright and getting brighter.

### *National economy numbers strong*

Not only is the national unemployment rate lower than it was during the average of the 1960s, 70s, 80s and 90s, but new economic numbers released last month by the Office of Management and Budget indicate more good news as well, namely:

➤ **A Falling Deficit:** This year's budget deficit is now forecast to be \$296 billion, or 2.3 percent of our economy (GDP). The deficit is 30 percent below the Bush Administration's February forecast.

➤ **GDP grew** at an annual rate of 5.6 percent in the first quarter of 2006, the fastest rate in 2½ years. Since August 2003, the U.S. has created more than 5.4 million new jobs — more than Japan and the 25 nations of the European Union combined.

most optimistic view on whether the country is heading on the right or wrong track.

Throw in the growing instability elsewhere in the world, and it becomes pretty easy to understand why even with so many good things to celebrate, there is a certain hesitation in the back of many minds. Consider the following:

➤ As tensions and conflict escalate between Israel, our strongest ally in the Middle East, and the nearby terrorist groups of Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Palestine, concerns rise proportionately.

Will a long, protracted war spread throughout the Middle East? And what role could Syria and Iran play—with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's recent comment, “Israel should be wiped off the map,” is there any doubt where he stands?

➤ What effect — if any — will last month's U. N. sanctions have on North Korea for its recent ballistic missile test?

Will North Korean President Kim Jong-il lead his reclusive communist nation back to a six-party multinational negotiating table? Or does the *next* missile test provoke a much more severe punishment than a mildly worded U.N. resolution?

➤ What is the upper limit to where the price for oil and gas is going? What can the president or Congress do to more immediately address the high cost of energy? And when will these soaring fuel prices start to weigh down an otherwise strong U.S. economy? (See Energy article, Page 5)

➤ Does having over 11 million illegal immigrants in the U.S. create a real problem? Or are there that many jobs in the United States — as some in Washington seem to believe — for which we can't find Americans to work? (See Immigration article, Page 4)

Elsewhere in this newsletter, you can express your thoughts on two of the most talked about topics of the summer: energy and illegal immigration. (See Survey, Page 4) Given the extreme importance — and timeliness — of these two issues, I hope you'll share your thoughts with me.

*See Letter continued on page 2*



*Earlier this month, I met with the Alabama 4-H youth delegation to discuss the importance of community service. Three of the students pictured with me are from the First District: Joseph Gary and Tia Alexis Black of Monroe County and Natalie Delois Woods of Washington County.*

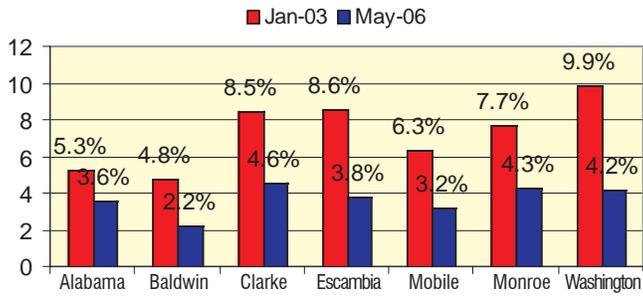
Federal revenues are up 13 percent from this time last year all while we continue the policy of sharply lowered tax burdens for families and small businesses (See Tax Relief inset, Page 2). In order to assure this continued growth and reduction in the deficit, we must maintain our pro-growth policies and remain diligent in our efforts to restrain federal government spending.

### *War, energy and illegal immigration temper enthusiasm*

So, you might ask, if everything is going so well with the economy, then why is the mood of the nation so sour, at least according to most national surveys?

Clearly, events in Iraq and Afghanistan — despite significant progress and achievements in recent months — have a way of tempering even the

### Unemployment Rate Lowest in History of Alabama



#### Call whenever we can be of service

As is often the case when Congress breaks for the August District Work Period, my staff and I will be crisscrossing the First District with a number of visits in all six counties.

Additionally, as this newsletter was going to press, final plans were being made for me to make two rare, but important, out of district trips during the month.

The first is a trip back to Iraq to see, firsthand, the progress our soldiers are making in this important area of the world.

With so many soldiers from Alabama still on the ground in Iraq, I feel I have a special responsibility to let our men and women in uniform know how much the people of south Alabama support them as they perform their most difficult duties.

Additionally, my friend and colleague, Congressman Henry Cuellar, (D-TX), is hosting an important field hearing on border security along the U.S.-Mexican border. Henry has invited me, along with a number of other members of Congress, to come to his district to witness how the flood of illegal immigration is affecting our society. I look forward to reporting back to you on both trips.

Meanwhile, whenever you need the services of our office, I hope you won't hesitate to call us toll free at 1-800-288-8721. Don't forget... my staff and I work for you. I hope our paths cross soon.

*To Bonner*

#### Every taxpayer who paid income taxes will get tax relief this year!

- 111 million taxpayers will see their taxes decline by an average of \$1,877
- A family of four earning \$40,000 will receive tax relief of \$2,010
- Over 5 million individuals and families will see their income tax liabilities completely eliminated
- 44 million families with children will receive an average of \$2,043
- 25 million small business owners will save an average of \$3,641
- Low-income families will also benefit from provisions that make the child credit refundable for more families and reduce marriage penalties
- Alabamians have saved an estimated \$10.5 billion as a result of the 2001, 2003, and 2004 tax cuts enacted by Congress

Source: Dept. of Treasury, Office of Tax Analysis

## Telephone Town Halls - A Big Hit

Ever in search of new ways to stay in touch with the residents of the First District, our office last month began a new outreach program — our first-ever “telephone town hall meetings.”

To my knowledge, these were the first such “meetings” in the entire state and certainly the first in southwest Alabama.

Even while Congress was in session and debate was taking place on the House floor, I was able to make calls to thousands of south Alabama residents from my office in Washington, D.C. For the next hour, I was able to listen to comments and answer questions on a wide-range of topics.

Quite frankly, this new technology wasn't even available until a few months ago. While it can't replace the personal interaction that comes from the more than 135 town hall meetings we've held throughout the district over the past 3½ years, it is a fascinating new way of staying connected to those we serve.

Interestingly, whenever we do “town halls,” as they are commonly known, we almost always run into the same problem:

- ◆ When you hold a meeting during the day, those who work can't take time from their jobs to come and share their views or ask a question.
- ◆ When you schedule the meetings at night, we sometimes hear complaints from our older constituents who say it is difficult to get out after dark.

These telephone town hall meetings are conducted during the evening after normal business hours. So now, from the comfort of your own home, you can ask a question, make a suggestion, or get my staff working on a case on your behalf.

They also provide those who are unable to travel to a traditional town hall meeting the opportunity to participate. In fact, during one call I spoke with two homebound individuals.

Allow me to extend my gratitude to everyone who took time out of their busy schedule to participate in this first series of telephone town hall meetings. While we're already planning a series of town hall meetings for later this year, this new service is just another way our office tries to stay in touch.

Several participants in our first series of “telephone town halls” commented on their personal experiences in using my office to assist them with cutting through the red tape of federal agencies. Whether it is a problem you are having getting your veterans benefits restored or obtaining your IRS refund, my office can often assist. While we cannot make an agency decide a case in your favor, we can ensure that you get full consideration.

In the coming weeks, we will be holding additional telephone town halls, and I hope I am able to talk to you soon.



*From my office in Washington, D.C. last month, I conducted my first telephone town hall. My legislative director observed the call.*

## Coast Guard Heroes Honored

Mobile has every reason to be proud of our longtime relationship with the U.S. Coast Guard. Earlier this summer, I was honored to participate in a special ceremony at the Arthur R. Outlaw Convention Center, a ceremony that recognized the heroism displayed by the members of the Coast Guard following Hurricane Katrina.



*In New Orleans, Petty Officer 1st Class Steven Huerta hoists two children into a Coast Guard rescue helicopter. Huerta is an aviation maintenance technician stationed at Mobile's Coast Guard Aviation Training Center.*

(U.S. Coast Guard photograph by Petty Officer 2nd Class Kyle Niemi)

All total, the Coast Guard rescued 33,544 people from flooded streets and rooftops — more than six times the number of Coast Guard rescues in an average year.

Four awards were presented at the ceremony. The highest — the Legion of Merit — was presented to Capt. David Callahan, commanding officer of the Coast Guard Aviation Training Center, and Capt. James Bjostad, commanding officer of Coast Guard Sector Mobile, for their outstanding leadership in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Nineteen others were presented the Distinguished Flying Cross, 13 received the Meritorious Service Medal, and 61 were pinned with the Air Medal.

Just a year ago, more than 5,290 Coast Guard personnel conducted search-and-rescue operations, waterway reconstitution, and environmental assessment operations with more than 400 Coast Guard reservists being called to active duty. At the height of the rescue mission, approximately one-third of the Coast Guard's entire air fleet was deployed to the central Gulf Coast region. For the rescue and recovery operations, the Coast Guard involved at least 62 aircraft, 30 cutters, and 111 small boats.

This selfless dedication — in a time of crisis — is a tribute to the families, friends, and communities of these men and women. While many "Coasties" only call south Alabama "home" on a temporary basis, we should all be grateful to have these outstanding men and women serving our nation, and I commend each of the recipients on a job well done.

## Fairhope's 1165th Military Police Company Recognized

The 1165th Military Police Company, based in Fairhope, Alabama, received the Presidential Unit Citation, the highest award bestowed upon an Army unit. The 1165th Military Police Company is the first unit of the Alabama National Guard to receive this honor.



The award was given to the 1165th for their service during Operation Iraqi Freedom. For thirteen months, these men and women conducted high profile patrols on the streets of Baghdad and trained Iraqi policemen. During their tour, the 1165th suffered many wounded soldiers and lost one fellow soldier, Specialist Christopher Taylor.

*I was honored to attend the ceremony in July at Fairhope High School where the 1165th Military Police Company received the Presidential Unit Citation.*

(Photo courtesy Victor Calhoun - Press-Register)

Even in times of difficulty, the morale remained high. On Easter Sunday 2004, after packing for the trip home, the 1165th received notice that their time in Iraq had been extended. Their dedication and commitment to the cause of freedom carried them through this time and is just one example of why the 1165th is worthy of such an honor.

The Presidential Unit Citation is given to a unit of the armed forces of the United States for extraordinary heroism in action against an armed enemy. The unit must display such gallantry, determination, and esprit de corps in accomplishing its mission under extremely difficult and hazardous conditions so as to set it apart from — and above — other units participating in the same campaign.

May their dedication to the cause of freedom be an example to their families, friends, neighbors, and citizens throughout Alabama and across the United States of America.

## Veterans Spending Doubled Since 1995

There is no way we can ever do enough to adequately say "thank you" to the men and women who have served — and defended — our country. That said, you may be pleased to know that spending to assist our veterans has more than doubled since 1995!

In fact, spending has increased from an average of \$923 per veteran in 1984 to more than \$2,934 per veteran in 2006 — Congress remains fully committed to funding the needs of our veterans.

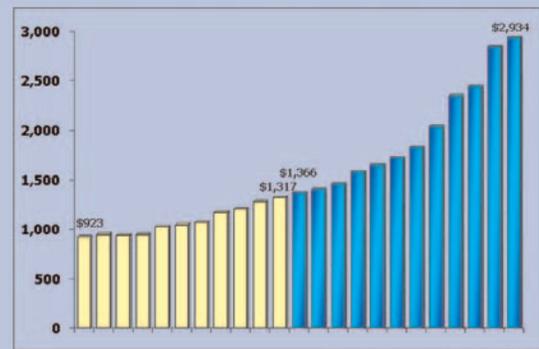
The House also increased veterans medical care funding by 16 percent in the

109th Congress, bringing it to approximately \$32.3 billion in FY 2007, an increase of \$4.5 billion from FY 2006.

On Memorial Day, President Bush signed into law legislation that prohibits demonstrations at military funerals held at national cemeteries. America's fallen heroes deserve our utmost respect as we remember their sacrifices.

As always, my staff and I remain committed to looking for other ways to ensure that veterans of south Alabama receive every benefit they so richly deserve.

Spending Per Veteran, 1984-2006



Source: Department of Veterans Affairs

# House Bill says "No" to Amnesty



One of the most hotly-debated issues to come before Congress this year has been the candid — and often emotionally charged — debate over how to deal with the more than 11 million people who are in the United States illegally.

Make no mistake, we must secure our borders and enforce the immigration laws already on the books.

For far too long, we have allowed illegal aliens to come and go across our U.S. borders with little recourse, if any. Further, we have allowed too many employers to provide an incentive for illegals to enter our country by knowingly hiring them.

Among other things, it is high time we reform the outdated immigration and naturalization system so we may begin to actually enforce our immigration laws.

To do this, the House passed an immigration bill (H.R. 4437) last December — and I continue to support our version of this legislation — which establishes as our top priorities the need to secure our borders and enforce our laws.

While the House bill does not propose any type of guest-worker program — temporary or otherwise — I fully admit that any final bill sent to the president for his signature should address this contentious issue. It should be possible to develop a no-amnesty, temporary guest-worker program. As shown below, the Senate has also passed an immigration bill (S. 2454) that is notably different from the House bill.

In a nutshell, it is my firm belief that we must stop illegals from coming into the U.S. in the future — not enhance their ability to enter the

country and “fast-track” their path to citizenship as the Senate bill proposes to do.

Many of the 11 million illegal immigrants who are already here have burdened our health care institutions, our education systems, and welfare programs, while many others are not contributing to the betterment of our society as a whole, not learning English, not assimilating into our communities, and not paying taxes.

Don't get me wrong, I believe in immigration — immigration is an important part of what has made America the great country she is. And like

many others throughout south Alabama, I am for legal immigration and believe we should help reform our current system to allow the process to work quicker, more efficiently, and in a manner that does not compromise our national security.

Illegal immigration, however, is just that — illegal. And I remain opposed to allowing illegals to continue their march into the U.S. without following the rules of entrance and without becoming productive members of our society.

### Help Wanted?

As part of our current system, there are several programs which allow immigrants to enter the country legally, obtain work visas, and leave the U.S. when their visa has expired.

Here in south Alabama, there are several industries such as seafood, agriculture, hotel and lodging, and construction that are in dire need of workers. With a statewide unemployment rate of 3.6 percent, the sad truth is that in some areas of our economy, there simply are not enough willing U.S. workers to fill these jobs, some of which are seasonal.

In order to ensure an adequate workforce, it may be necessary to expand the current programs that legally provide work visas to immigrants who are willing to abide by the rules. Most of these workers enter the country legally and, by law, are required to leave the country when their work visas expire — these laws must be enforced.

Workers who have entered the country illegally should not, in my view, be granted permanent citizenship just because they have remained in the U.S. for a certain number of years.

Compare the House and Senate Immigration Bills		
	House	Senate
Places approximately 11 million illegal immigrants on a different, easier path to citizenship (AMNESTY)	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
Creates a guest-worker program that puts 200,000 illegal workers on a direct path to legalization (without requiring legal entry into the US)	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
Instills employer accountability:		
Employee verification system that requires companies to screen ALL employees	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Employee Verification system that requires companies to only screen NEW hires	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
Benefits for illegal aliens (right to Social Security and taxpayer subsidized tuition rates at colleges and universities)	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
Constructs fencing at strategic locations along the US-Mexico border	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>
Increases number of border patrol agents, inspectors, and immigration and customs enforcement officers	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>
Enhances penalties for alien smuggling	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>
Authorizes new detention space to hold immigrants who have been apprehended at U.S. borders	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>

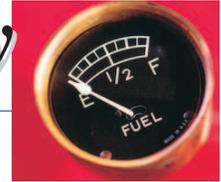
## EXPRESS Your Op

<p><i>Jo Bonner's Position:</i> <i>Oppose Amnesty for Illegal Immigrants</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>I agree with Jo.</b> Granting aliens sends the wrong n will only encourage millic law and cross our border
<p><i>Jo Bonner's Position:</i> <i>Strengthen Border Control</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>I agree with Jo.</b> We shou our borders by using phy tronic surveillance, and a entry inspectors.
<p><i>Jo Bonner's Position:</i> <i>Expedite Deportation of Illegal Aliens</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>I agree with Jo.</b> We shou aliens apprehended by B in custody until their immr.
<p><i>Jo Bonner's Position:</i> <i>Citizens Should Learn English</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>I agree with Jo.</b> New citi. English to better assimila. become a productive par. Government documents : lots should be printed on.
<p><i>Jo Bonner's Position:</i> <i>Increase Energy Production</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>I agree with Jo.</b> I support production in — the deep Continental Shelf (OCS), a Alabama should get a port enues from that production
<p><i>Jo Bonner's Position:</i> <i>Continue to Develop Alternative Fuels and Technology</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>I agree with Jo.</b> I support alternative fuels and woulc scientists work to end our eign or domestic — and v nology that would permit t. cles that run on such alter. electricity, and hydrogen.
<p><i>Jo Bonner's Position:</i> <i>Open a Portion of ANWR</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>I agree with Jo.</b> We shou the Arctic National Wildlif limited exploration and st process to allow for new in the U.S.
<p><i>Your Information:</i></p>	NAME: _____ ADDRESS: _____

Please fill out this survey & return today to:  
1141 Montlimar Drive, Suite 3010  
Mobile, AL 36609

**SIGN ME UP FOR E-MAIL**

# The Rising Cost of Energy



Anyone who has stopped at the local service station in recent days has noticed that we're paying a much higher price for fuel.

Over the course of the summer, we have seen oil prices break all records, and at the time this newsletter went to press, it

appeared the price of crude oil would continue to rise. For most of the summer, area gas prices have averaged \$2.96 a gallon for regular unleaded, up six cents in a month and 64 cents from a year ago.

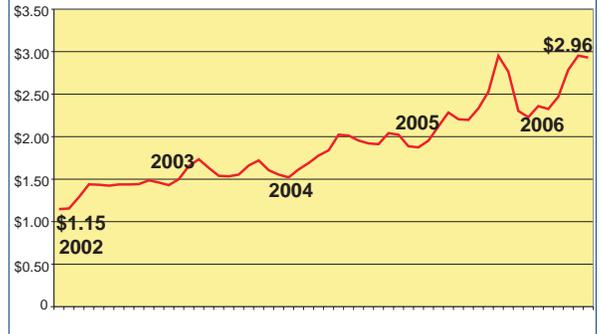
In fact, fuel prices have almost tripled since the start of 2002.

Prices have risen dramatically as fighting spreads throughout the Middle East and the standoff continues over Iran's nuclear program. Clearly, this anxiety over tensions around the world — combined with the fact we are in the midst of another hurricane season — indicates that prices may not drop in a significant way any time in the immediate future.

Rising gas prices are an alarming trend. So, what has Congress done to respond to this problem? The solutions are complicated, and unfortunately, none are instant. As I have said numerous times, we didn't wake up one morning to find ourselves in an energy crisis, and we are not going to get out of it overnight.

Even with the Energy Policy Act signed into law last year, the problems highlighted by last year's hurricanes reveal that much more needs to be done to limit the United States' dependency on foreign oil and gas.

## Gas Prices (National Avg.)



To encourage new energy production here at home, the House has taken up — and the Senate isn't far behind — new legislation aimed at expanding our domestic offshore oil and natural gas production, as well as increasing the share of energy royalties produced offshore for coastal states.

Earlier this summer, the House passed H.R. 4761, the Deep Ocean Energy Resources Act (DOER Act), which would allow more of America's massive energy resources to be produced in the deep seas of the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). I, along with 113 of my House colleagues, cosponsored this bill, which had the support of the complete House delegations of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.

The DOER Act grants coastal states the authority to keep offshore energy production 100 miles away from their coastlines, while enabling the United States to produce energy in the waters beyond 100 miles from the coast.

Since 1982, the majority of America's offshore areas have been restricted to energy production. In 1990, President George H.W. Bush issued a presidential directive banning new energy production off the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, parts of offshore Alaska, and the eastern Gulf of Mexico. In 1998, President Clinton extended these restrictions through 2012.

The DOER Act allows states to have more control of energy exploration off their coasts by giving them the opportunity to opt out of these restrictions.

Specifically, the bill gives states permanent authority to manage energy production within 100 miles of their coastline, while allowing the United States to authorize energy exploration between 100 and 200 miles off states' coastlines.

See **Energy** continued on page 6

## Immigration

I support amnesty to illegal immigrants. Amnesty is the best message. Amnesty is the only way to break the cycle of illegal immigration.

I disagree. We should grant amnesty to the more than 11 million illegal aliens so they can quickly become United States citizens.

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

I support improved control of the border. Physical barriers, electronic surveillance, and additional port-of-entry inspections are necessary.

I disagree. We shouldn't worry so much with border control and should increase the number of immigrants permitted to enter our country.

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

I support requiring all illegal immigrants to remain in detention until their immigration hearings.

I disagree. Once apprehended, illegal immigrants should be released and required to report back at a later date for their immigration hearings.

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

I support requiring immigrants to learn English before they can enter our nation and to be a part of our society. We should also require our election ballots to be in English.

I disagree. Immigrants should not have to learn English, but should continue speaking their native language. Government should fund bilingual educational programs and print documents and ballots in several languages.

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

I support exploration of the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) and I agree the state of royalties from such production.

I disagree. I do not think we should drill in the OCS even if it means that the state of Alabama would lose possibly tens of millions in royalties from such production.

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

I support the development of alternative fuel sources like ethanol, biodiesel, and hydrogen.

I disagree. I support our continued reliance on foreign oil and oppose spending my tax dollars to continue the research and development of alternative fuel sources.

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

I support opening a portion of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) to oil drilling and streamlining the permit process for refineries to be built in Alaska.

I disagree. I do not support drilling in 2,000 of the nearly 20 million acres of the US ANWR and would not like to increase the number of refineries built in the U.S. over the next several years.

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Other things we are doing...

➤ Along with 82 of my House colleagues, I have cosponsored H.R. 4409, the Fuel Choices for American Security Act, sponsored by U.S. Rep. Jack Kingston (R-GA).

The Fuel Choices for American Security Act would set a national goal of cutting our dependence on oil imported from the Middle East by 2015. This legislation would also accelerate our use and development of existing technologies and fuel alternatives by providing tax credits to people who buy hybrid vehicles and to gas stations and automobile manufacturers to increase their use of flex fuel technologies.

➤ The House also passed H.R. 5429, the American-Made Energy and Good Jobs Act, which authorizes oil and gas exploration and production in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR).

The resources available in ANWR could potentially provide our largest domestic source of oil. State-of-the-art technology has made it easier than ever to harvest the vast resources available here. Exploration in ANWR will be limited to a small number of acres and conducted under the most stringent environmental protection requirements ever applied to a federal energy project. This legislation is also being considered by the Senate.

FOR UPDATES, E-MAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

(Energy continued from page 5)

States, such as Alabama, that allow energy production off of their coasts would also share in the revenues generated from the OCS leases.

Currently, almost all revenues from OCS drilling go to the federal government; however, revenue generated from drilling on onshore federal lands is split evenly between the state and the federal government.

The DOER Act would allow coastal, energy producing states to be treated as states that allow onshore drilling, thereby sharing in the revenue.

Today, the United States is 60 percent more dependent on foreign sources of energy than we were 30 years ago. It is incomprehensible to me that outdated federal regulations still prevent exploration of the OCS. At a time when energy prices are at record highs, we cannot allow America's offshore oil and natural gas reserves to remain unused, nor should states that choose not to drill off their coasts share in the revenues.

According to the U.S. Minerals Management Service (MMS), America's deep seas of the OCS contain 420 trillion cubic feet of natural gas (the U.S. consumes 23 TCF per year) and 86 billion barrels of oil (the U.S. imports 4.5 billion per year). Still, with all of these resources on our doorstep, the United States continues to send more than \$300 billion overseas every year for energy.

Opening the OCS is, to me, a common-sense approach to addressing America's energy needs. It is long overdue for coastal producing states to receive their fair share of oil and gas revenues, and it is vital that states have authority over the energy produced off of their coast.

OCS legislation is also being considered by the Senate. Alabama Senator Jeff Sessions (R-AL) has worked diligently with Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-TN) on a comprehensive OCS bill that would also allow energy production in about 8 million acres of the Gulf of Mexico.

As the Senate continues to move forward with their bill, one notable proposed change from the House bill is the profit sharing aspect. While the House has included a profit sharing package that starts off at 25 percent and increases every year by 5 percent until it reaches the maximum percentage of 50 percent, the Senate's bill may limit that percentage to 37.5 percent with no yearly increase.

Now more than ever, we must develop new and effective methods of energy conservation and research alternative fuel sources to keep our vehicles on the road and the economy moving in the right direction.

As this issue continues to evolve, please know I will keep you informed.



# Other Important Issues...

## SPENDING RESTRAINT

Congress has taken bold steps to restrain government spending, even while absorbing costs for Iraq and Afghanistan and Hurricane Katrina



recovery. The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 will save \$40 billion in mandatory spending over 5 years. Nevertheless, the projected growth of entitlements — particularly Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security — may continue to the point they crowd out the rest of the federal budget if needed reforms are not made. We must continue to reduce mandatory spending, or it will consume more than 60 percent of the federal budget in the next 10 years.

## PENSION PROTECTION

The House passed legislation (H.R. 2830) which would help fix outdated pension rules and ensure employers properly and adequately fund their



pension plans, provide meaningful disclosure to workers regarding the status of their pension plan, protect taxpayers from a possible multi-billion dollar taxpayer bailout, and make modifications to encourage greater personal savings for retirement. Currently, this bill is in conference negotiations between the House and Senate. Pension plan protection is vital to save America's workers from high-profile corporate bankruptcies and pension plan terminations.

## VOTING RIGHTS ACT REAUTHORIZATION

Last month, the House reauthorized the Voting Rights Act of 1965. To read the entire statement I entered into the



*Congressional Record* explaining my vote, please go to my website at <http://bonner.house.gov>.

## ALABAMA DROUGHT RELIEF

Last month, I joined Governor Bob Riley (R-AL), Alabama Agriculture Commissioner Ron Sparks (D-AL), and other members of the



Alabama Congressional delegation in a meeting with USDA officials in response to the severe drought and high temperatures much of the state has experienced this summer. USDA has determined that all six counties in Alabama's First Congressional District are primary natural disaster areas, which makes farm operators in these counties eligible to be considered for low emergency loans from the Farm Service Agency (FSA). If you need assistance, please contact your local FSA office.

## EDUCATION FUNDING

While Congress continues to reduce the deficit and slow the growth of entitlements, federal funding for education has remained a priority



and has more than doubled over the past 9 years. Under the final FY 2006 appropriations bill, discretionary funding for the Department of Education climbed from \$23 billion in FY 1996 to \$57 billion for FY 2006 — an increase of 150 percent. Education funding for our country's youth remains a priority as Congress continues to work through the FY 2007 appropriations process.

## SHARE YOUR VIEWS

While these are some of the higher profile issues we have recently considered, there are many other issues being debated in



Congress and certainly others that may be very important to you. Please know that we want to hear your views! You may write, call, or email me through our website at <http://bonner.house.gov>.

## Congressional Art Competition Winners

On April 30, 2006, I was pleased to host a reception for the winners of this year's First Congressional District Art Competition: *An Artistic Discovery*. I have been honored to continue sponsoring this annual event because of the exposure it provides for talented young artists in our area.

First place honors were presented to Angelo Mosely, a student at John L. LeFlore High School. Mosely's piece, "What it is..." will be displayed in the halls of the United States Capitol complex for one year along with the winners from other congressional districts across the country.

Below is a complete list of the winners from this year's competition. Congratulations to all of them for entering such great work!

**First Place:** Angelo Mosely, John L. LeFlore High School, Title of Work: "What it is..."

**Second Place:** Candace Wilson, St. Paul's Episcopal School, Title of Work: "Wallflowers"

**Third Place:** Stephen Heubach, Alma Bryant High School, Title of Work: "Untitled"

### Honorable Mentions:

Jo Anna Rocker, John L. LeFlore High School, Title of Work: "Rock the Bay"

Kate Middleton, St. Paul's Episcopal School, Title of Work: "Chaos"

Lan Phuong Nguyen, Alma Bryant High School, Title of Work: "Cultural Image"

Allison Deppe, St. Paul's Episcopal School, Title of Work: "Mime Duck and Clown Fish"

Lindsey McNeely, St. Paul's Episcopal School, Title of Work: "Bubblewands and Balloons"

## New Baldwin County Cattle and Fair Association Community Shelter



*Baldwin County Commissioners Wayne Gruenloh and Albert Lipscomb, Baldwin County Cattle and Fair Association President George Campbell, Alabama USDA Office of Rural Development Director Steve Pelham, Rep. Steve McMillan, and Baldwin County Cattle and Fair Association Manager Sonny Hankins and I break ground for the new shelter.*

In May, the Alabama Emergency Management Agency was awarded \$7.5 million by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The project funding is to be used for the construction of a new hurricane shelter at the Baldwin County Cattle and Fair Association grounds in Robertsedale.

The \$7.5 million grant, administered through FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant program, represents a 75 percent federal share of the total project cost of \$10 million. The Baldwin County Commission and

the Baldwin County Cattle and Fair Association will provide the remaining 25 percent of the project's cost.

Shelter space in Baldwin County is at a critical low, and the lessons learned from the past several hurricane seasons have shown we must have safe, accessible shelters available.

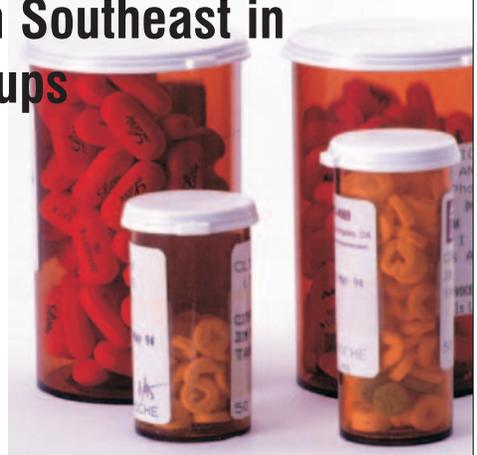
The shelter will be built according to "FEMA 361 Design and Construction Guidelines," and will be able to accommodate 1900 occupants and withstand wind gusts of up to 200 miles per hour. Construction is expected to be completed by May 30, 2007.

## Alabama Ranks #1 in Southeast in Medicare Part D Signups

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recently announced that Alabama ranked number one among southeastern states and fourth in the nation in enrollment in the Medicare prescription drug plan.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) set the enrollment goal for Alabama at 538,002. Alabama exceeded that goal and enrolled 620,300 or 115.3 percent. Nationally, only three states finished ahead of Alabama: California (118.6%), Colorado (117.0%), and New Mexico (115.4%). In the First Congressional District, 89,413 or 81 percent of Medicare beneficiaries enrolled in the program.

The next open season for enrollment is November 15, 2006, through December 31, 2006.



During this time, you can call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) and talk to a Medicare representative or visit [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).



*I presented Angelo Mosely, a student at John L. LeFlore High School, with first-place honors in this year's First Congressional District Art Competition: An Artistic Discovery. His piece, "What it is..." will be displayed in the halls of the United States Capitol complex for one year along with the winners from other congressional districts across the country.*



Sen. Jeff Sessions, Airbus North America Chairman Allan McArtor, Sen. Richard Shelby, Gov. Bob Riley, EADS CEO Tom Enders, and I at the groundbreaking event earlier this year for Airbus North America's engineering center at Brookley Field. (Photo courtesy Tad Denson - MyShotz.com)



I was pleased to host a dinner at the Original Oyster House for the students I nominated for consideration to one of our nation's service academies. Pictured with me are William Smith and Sam Shea.

## Dedicated and Talented Staff

I am privileged to have a dedicated and talented group of individuals working for me in Washington, D.C., Mobile, and Baldwin County.

You can be proud of the work they do every day on your behalf, and I hope you won't hesitate to contact them whenever you need assistance.

### Washington Office:

- Alan Spencer - Chief of Staff
- Kelle Strickland - Legislative Director and Counsel
- Watson Donald - Senior Legislative Assistant
- Jon Hand - Legislative Assistant
- Nancy Wall - Press Secretary
- Suzannah Weeks - Executive Assistant/Washington Scheduler
- Errical Pouncy - Director of Constituent Services

### Mobile and Baldwin County Offices:

- Eliska Morgan - Deputy Chief of Staff/District Director
- Elizabeth Roney - Senior Caseworker
- Landra Day - District Scheduler/Special Projects Manager
- Frazier Payne - Field Rep. for Mobile, Clarke, and Washington Counties
- Rachel Kaiser - Field Rep. for Baldwin, Escambia, and Monroe Counties
- Courtney Soward - Constituent Services Representative/Office Manager
- Brooks Chew - Constituent Services Representative
- Brandy Jackson - Constituent Services Representative/Grants Coordinator

## HOW TO CONTACT US...

### DC Office:

315 Cannon HOB  
Washington, DC 20515  
Phone: (202) 225-4931  
Fax: (202) 225-0562

### Mobile Office:

1141 Montimar Drive  
Suite 3010  
Mobile, AL 36609  
Phone: (251) 690-2811  
Fax: (251) 342-0404  
Toll Free: 1-800-288-8721

### Baldwin County Office:

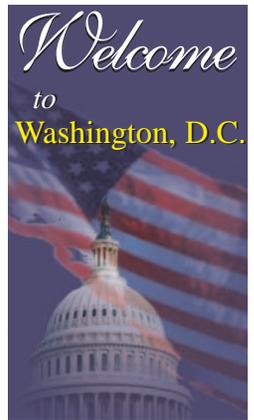
1302 N. McKenzie St.  
Foley, AL 36535  
Phone: (251) 943-2073  
Fax: (251) 943-2093

Web site: <http://bonner.house.gov>

## "Welcome to Washington" brochure hot off the press

Earlier this year, my staff and I compiled a brochure of places to see while visiting Washington, D.C. While this is not an exhaustive list of things to do in our nation's capital, it does include many of my favorite places. From monuments to museums to memorials, there are so many things to do in this fascinating city so rich with history and so full of places to explore.

My staff and I are here to help make your visit more special. If you would like to request a copy of this free brochure, please call my office at 1-800-288-8721.



## Important numbers for your family

### FEMA Hotline - 1-800-621-FEMA

#### County Emergency Management Agency Directors



Leigh Anne Ryals  
Baldwin Co. EMA  
251-972-6807



Roy Waite  
Clarke Co. EMA  
251-275-8775



David Adams  
Escambia Co. EMA  
251-867-0232



Walt Dickerson  
Mobile Co. EMA  
251-460-8000



Chuck Murph  
Monroe Co. EMA  
251-743-3259

Photo  
not  
available

Floyd Williams  
Washington Co. EMA  
251-847-2668