



Alabama's First District

CONGRESSMAN JO BONNER

THE WASHINGTON REPORT

2236 Rayburn House Office Building ★ Washington, DC 20515 ★ (202) 225-4931 ★ Spring 2011

Dear Friends,

Life often seems like a roller-coaster ride filled with ups and downs, lots of curves and a few surprises along the way.

This has certainly been the case for many of us in South Alabama for the past several months, long before the Moon Pie dropped in downtown Mobile at midnight on New Year's Eve.

For one, there continues to be an understandable angst in many of our communities — much like a bad hangover for those who know how that feels — as a result of last year's BP/Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

While it appears — at least at this time — that we may have dodged an environmental disaster along Coastal Alabama, the economic toll this tragedy has brought — on top of an already weak recovery from the worst recession since the Great Depression — has kept many South Alabama families from joining some of the disconnected politicians in Washington who want us to believe that happy days are here again.

In truth, South Alabamians by our very nature are an optimistic and resilient bunch. But the oil spill, as well as the loss of the U.S. Air Force refueling tanker competition in February — not to mention the decision by Carnival Cruise Lines to pull its ship out of Mobile — has simply left a number of us with a sour taste in our mouth.

For all those dark clouds, however, there are also several reasons to remain hopeful.

Elsewhere in this newsletter there is an article about the 2,000 new shipbuilding jobs that are coming to Austal USA; there is also a story about the grand opening of the new \$5 billion ThyssenKrupp Steel plant on the Mobile-Washington county line.

And recent announcements from Lakeside Steel and Golden Dragon Copper in north Clarke County — bring-

ing more than 500 badly needed jobs to this area of our state — are just the latest news that suggests it may be possible for 2011 to be a turning point in the recovery after all.

We're broke

In many ways the challenges we face at home — or even at the state capitol in Montgomery where Governor Robert Bentley is trying to stretch dollars — pale in comparison to the fiscal hole we find ourselves in as a nation.

While it isn't fun to admit, the fact is the American people deserve to hear the truth: America is broke.

Over the last two years, discretionary spending has grown by 24 percent and we've added more than \$3 trillion to the national debt, which currently stands at \$14.2 trillion. And if you count the \$787 billion stimulus package the president and his allies passed in their first couple of

months in office, discretionary spending rose an alarming 84 percent during this time.

Friends, it is clear to many that we are on an unsustainable path. And while no one person or party is responsible for this ticking time bomb, our problems have gotten worse — not better — over the past few years.

Unfortunately, even with all the increased levels of spending by the federal government, the jobs that were promised — as well as the goal of keeping the national unemployment rate below 8 percent — never materialized.

Last month, Wisconsin Congressman Paul Ryan, the new chairman of the House Budget Committee, unveiled the "Path to Prosperity: Restoring America's Promise."

Among other things, Congressman Ryan's budget, which passed the House April 15, would cut \$6.2 trillion in government spending over the next decade.

In addition to putting the brakes on government
See Letter continued on page 2



The Dogwood Trail Maids, along with the Fairhope High School Marching Band, recently represented South Alabama in the National Cherry Blossom Festival and Parade in Washington, DC. Bay Minette Mayor Jamie Tillery (right) joined me in welcoming these lovely young ladies.

Indebted to their sacrifice for our nation

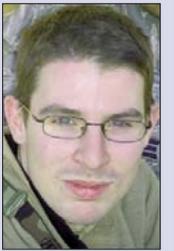
Sadly, over the last 12 months, South Alabama has added three more names to the list of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for their country in military service around the world:

Staff Sgt David C. Smith, age 26, of Eight Mile, lost his life on June 9, 2010, in a helicopter crash in Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

Spc Andrew Hand, age 25, of Enterprise and Gulf Shores, died July 24, 2010, in Qalat, Afghanistan, when his military vehicle struck an improvised explosive device.

Cpl Joseph C. Whitehead, age 22, of Axis, died on January 17, 2011, when he encountered an improvised explosive device while conducting sweeping operations in Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

We honor and remember David, Andrew and Joseph — as well as all the young men and women who have given their all for their country and for their fellow soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines. 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.



Staff Sgt Smith



Spc Hand



Cpl Whitehead

Inside this edition...

Art Competition.....	page 2
Oil Spill Anniversary.....	page 3
National Debt Crisis.....	page 4
New Faces in Congress.....	page 5
Austal USA.....	page 6
Academy Nominees.....	page 7
Health Care Repeal.....	page 8

(Letter continued from page 1)

spending, this budget would also keep taxes low so the economy can get some stability and momentum. By eliminating roughly \$800 billion in tax increases imposed by the new health care law, this budget would also prevent more than \$1.5 trillion in new tax increases called for in President Obama's own budget from taking place.

Finally, this budget will protect health and retirement security for all Americans, starting with saving Medicare.

For people 55 and older, nothing will change for the Medicare you have paid for and are depending on. But starting in 2022, new Medicare beneficiaries will be enrolled in the same kind of health-care program that Members of Congress and federal employees enjoy. In fact, all future Medicare recipients will be able to choose a plan that works best for them from a list of guaranteed coverage options.

Keep in mind this is not a voucher program but is, instead, a premium-support model which would be paid by Medicare to the tune of \$15,000 a year to the plan chosen by you, the beneficiary. Medicare would simply subsidize its costs, with special provisions for those lower-income beneficiaries and those with greater health risks.

As I explained to a resident from Baldwin County who called the office late one night concerned about what he had heard about this plan, if we don't do something now to keep Medicare alive, it won't be around for many more years. And while Congressman Ryan's plan isn't perfect, at least he had the courage and conviction — on behalf of many of us in Washington — to put his ideas on the table.

Even former President Clinton's chief of staff, Erskine Bowles, and former Senator Alan Simpson — the two men who led the deficit reduction commission — said, "The budget released by Paul Ryan is a serious, honest, straightforward approach to addressing our nation's enormous fiscal challenges."

Naturally, the trillion dollar question that remains is this: Even with a plan in place to get our fiscal house back in order, do we, the American people, have the will, and are we really willing to make the necessary sacrifices to turn our country around?

As always, I look forward to hearing your ideas and suggestions on these and many other important topics at our upcoming town meetings.

Heartfelt thanks for the privilege of working for you.

To Bowser

Congratulations to 1st District Art Competition Winners

Kristin Granade, a student at St. Paul's Episcopal School in Mobile, is the 2011 winner of the First Congressional District Art Competition. Her mixed-media artwork "Child's Play" (pictured right) will be featured among the winning entries from America's other congressional districts to be displayed in the U.S. Capitol for one year.

Congratulations also goes to our second and third place winners: Aaron Miller, Escambia County High School, "Untitled"; and Mary Ball, St. Paul's, "Grandad", respectively.

The First Congressional District Art Competition is part of "An Artistic Discovery," an annual nationwide art contest that has spotlighted the talents of thousands of young artists going back three decades.

It is an honor to be part of such a worthy competition that inspires the creativity of our young people while showcasing the very best of their efforts in Washington, DC.



A group of students from both Jackson High School and Jackson Academy participated in our town meeting last year.



14 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 May, I will have held 231 official town meetings throughout the First District since first coming to Congress in 2003.

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

Monday, May 16

- 9:00 - 10:00 a.m. - Bayou La Batre
First United Methodist Church
- 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. - Dauphin Island
City Hall
- 3:00 - 4:00 p.m. - Saraland
Civic Center

Tuesday, May 17

- 9:00 - 10:00 a.m. - Citronelle
City Hall
- 11:00 - 12:00 noon - Chatom
Scott House
- 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. - Jackson
City Hall
- 4:00 - 5:00 p.m. - Grove Hill
Community Center

Wednesday, May 18

- 9:00 - 10:00 a.m. - Atmore
Municipal Auditorium
- 11:00 - 12:00 noon - Brewton
City Hall
- 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. - Monroeville
Old Monroe County Courthouse

Thursday, May 19

- 9:00 - 10:00 a.m. - Bay Minette
City Hall
- 11:00 - 12:00 noon - Daphne
City Hall
- 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. - Gulf Shores
City Hall
- 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. - Orange Beach
City Hall

Tackling America's High Gas Prices

Gas prices are once again inching toward record highs, and many in Washington are pointing fingers over who is to blame.

According to the Heritage Foundation, gas prices have increased by more than 67 percent during the first 17 months of the new administration, compared to a seven percent increase during the same timeframe of the Bush administration.

Clearly, the issue of American energy independence has been debated for at least 40 years in Washington, yet little real progress has been made.

On March 30, President Obama signaled a shift in his energy strategy, including an apparent willingness to allow more domestic oil and gas drilling.

The president set a goal of cutting America's foreign oil imports by one-third over the next quarter century as he pledged to find — and produce — more oil at home and continue his emphasis on development of renewable energy.

As he correctly pointed out: "...there are no quick fixes." However, his administration's policies to date have done nothing to move the process along at a faster pace. Fortunately, he can change that.

Those of us along the Gulf Coast know a lot about the risks and benefits of fossil fuels. We demand that all drilling be safe and every precaution be taken to prevent future environmental disasters like the BP oil spill.

We also understand the economic importance of oil and gas drilling and certainly feel the impact of excessive regulation and de facto drilling moratoriums through lost local jobs and ever-increasing fuel costs.

Despite the economic and job-creating benefits of enhanced development of domestic resources, the administration's current regulations, policies and proposals are hurting jobs, raising energy costs and stunting government revenues.

Admittedly, there are no quick fixes. However, we can restore confidence in our economy by removing the administration's bureaucratic roadblocks to domestic energy production.

It's time for an "all-of-the-above" energy strategy, which opens up American offshore and land-based oil and gas reserves to safe and responsible drilling.

We should also promote the development of domestic natural gas, clean coal, wind, solar, hydropower and geothermal, as well as safe nuclear technology.

It's long past time to get to work on these goals.

One Year Anniversary Marks Spill

With the one-year anniversary of the tragic BP/Deepwater Horizon oil spill behind us, residents all along Coastal Alabama are guardedly hopeful that this year's summer tourist season will allow us, once and for all, to move forward confident in our future.

Unfortunately, much like when Hurricanes Ivan and Katrina came to our area, the trauma and scars associated with something as big as this oil spill usually remain long after the national TV cameras leave.

The good news is most of our beautiful beaches are cleaner than ever and the seafood — which is being tested for safety more than any other seafood in the world — is as good, safe and plentiful as ever.

But for those of us who have had to live out this year-long saga, the real damage to our economy lingers on in the form of lost revenues for our seafood processors as well as other local businesses and individuals who were dependent upon a 2010 season that never materialized.

More than a year after the worst environmental disaster to ever strike our country brought devastation to our coastal economy — idling workers and driving away vital tourist dollars — thousands of local businesses and individuals still have not had their damage claims properly reviewed by the president's hand-picked claims administrator, Ken Feinberg.

Sitting atop a BP compensation fund totaling \$20 billion, Mr. Feinberg and his Gulf Coast Claims Facility (GCCF) have so far paid out only a fraction of the amount we are due.

According to a University of Alabama analysis, Alabama's total economic cost from the oil spill could climb to \$3.3 billion in lost economic output and nearly \$1 billion in lost earnings. As of the end of April, only \$737 million has been paid out to Alabama residents and businesses by Mr. Feinberg and his associates.

In choosing Mr. Feinberg for the post back on June 16, 2010, the president said, "The people of the Gulf have my commitment that BP will meet its obligations to them."

He went on to add, "Ken Feinberg will run the independent claims process we're putting in place. And there will be a three-person panel to adjudicate claims that are turned down. Every effort will be made to expedite these claims... and I'm confident (Ken) will ensure that claims are administered as quickly, as fairly, and as transparently as possible."

While Alabama's Gulf Coast counties have suffered significant economic losses due to the BP oil spill, they are not alone in voicing frustration over the broken claims process.

Officials from Florida, Louisiana and Mississippi have also challenged Mr. Feinberg's failure to follow through on promises to make the claims system more transparent and more responsive to filers.

Over the last few months, the Associate U.S. Attorney General has expressed concern over the claims process and, at my urging, has met with local leaders and Alabama coastal businesses caught between the BP oil spill and the failed claims system.

In fact, the Justice Department has asked Mr. Feinberg to reconsider many denied claims and to ensure that the GCCF was not excluding whole categories of businesses. Fortunately, South Alabamians have had the strong support of our new Attorney General, Luther Strange, as well as committed leadership from both Governor Robert Bentley and former Governor Bob Riley, to name just a few state leaders.

It is totally unacceptable that there are still so many businesses and individuals being victimized by the oil spill. Needless to say, my office stands shoulder-to-shoulder with our Coastal leaders at all levels — from City Hall to the U.S. Capitol — to keep the pressure and spotlight on both BP and Mr. Feinberg to fulfill their promise of fairly compensating the victims of this unprecedented spill.



President Obama came to Alabama last June during the height of the oil spill to discuss federal relief efforts with Governor Riley, myself, and other state and local officials.

Honoring 50th Anniversary of *To Kill A Mockingbird*

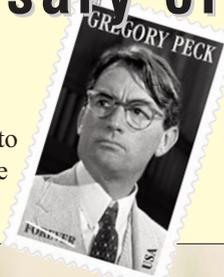
Last summer, the literary world turned its attention to Monroeville and Monroe County for the 50th anniversary of the timeless novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, penned by legendary local author, Nelle Harper Lee.

The first copies of *To Kill a Mockingbird* began rolling off the printing press in July 1960. Ms. Lee's foray into the literary world exceeded all expectations, garnering her the Pulitzer Prize and, a half century later, her novel is still prompting classroom discussion. To date, *To Kill a Mockingbird* has been published in over 40 languages and has sold in excess of 30 million copies.

In 2007, President George W. Bush presented Ms. Lee with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and on March 2, President Barack Obama awarded her the National Medal of Arts.

Last July, the U.S. House passed a resolution I introduced honoring Ms. Lee and the 50th anniversary of her great American novel.

Last month, the U.S. Postal Service released its latest Hollywood Legends stamp honoring actor Gregory Peck in the role for which he is most remembered, Atticus Finch, in the 1962 motion picture *To Kill a Mockingbird*. As the Postal Service press release noted, "The film earned eight Academy Award nominations, countless international honors, and the Best Actor Oscar for Peck. Perhaps Miss Lee summed it up best: 'Atticus Finch gave Gregory Peck an opportunity to play himself.'"



Last August, I presented a copy of the U.S. House Resolution honoring Nelle Harper Lee and the 50th anniversary of "To Kill a Mockingbird" to Stephanie Rogers, executive director of the Monroe County Heritage Museum.

New Committee Assignments

Committee assignments are an important way for a Member of Congress to advocate for his constituents back home. And for the 112th Congress, I have been fortunate to receive two new key assignments on the House Appropriations Committee.

This year, I was appointed to the subcommittees on Defense and Financial Services, while also continuing to serve on the subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and Science.

The appointment to Defense represents the first time South Alabama has had a seat on this important subcommittee since former Congressman Jack Edwards of Mobile made a name for his work back in the 1970s and 1980s. Jack served as the Defense Subcommittee's Ranking Member.

With an increasing emphasis on the growth of the defense industry in South Alabama, and given Alabama's substantial military infrastructure and defense-related employment state wide, this assignment could provide significant benefit to our state and region in the coming years.

I've also been selected to serve on the Financial Services subcommittee which has jurisdiction over a number of federal agencies that play key roles in our economy including the Treasury Department, Office of Management and Budget, Securities and Exchange Commission, the Federal Judiciary, as well as the Federal Trade Commission and the Federal Communications Commission, to name but a few.

The Commerce, Justice, and Science subcommittee oversees a number of federal agencies important to our local and state economy, including the Small Business Administration, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which governs fisheries, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

For the 112th Congress, I was also appointed by Speaker John Boehner to serve as chairman of the House Ethics Committee — admittedly a challenging job at times — but an honor all the same. With Congressional approval ratings in the low teens for the past several years, I hope to use my time as chairman to help restore some of the credibility Congress has lost with the American people.

Debt Threatens Our Nation's Future

America is under attack. Yet, the force that threatens to destroy our economy — and the future of our country — is self-made: our nation's debt. Sadly, it's real, and its impact is unavoidable unless serious steps are taken today to halt the government's spending of money we don't have.

Two years ago, our nation experienced our first trillion dollar deficit. The federal government spent one trillion dollars more than it collected in revenues. Last year, we witnessed our second trillion dollar budget deficit. This year, our annual budget deficit is expected to reach over \$1.6 trillion — the largest in history.

According to the Treasury Department, our nation's debt currently stands at over \$14 trillion, which amounts to a \$45,500 "birth tax" for every child born this year in America — equal to \$120,500 for every U.S. household.

Our indebtedness is also an issue of national security.

Friends, we are spending money we don't have, borrowing 42 cents on the dollar and sending the bill to our children and grandchildren. Nearly 47 percent of the money we're borrowing to finance our public debt is owed to foreign countries. China is our biggest lender, holding 29.2 percent of our debt.

Truly, America's debt crisis is bipartisan and has been decades in the making.

Since 1946, federal government spending has averaged 19.7 percent of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and tax revenue (the amount of money the federal government collects in taxes) has averaged 17.7 percent of GDP. While tax revenues are predicted to remain near their historic levels as a percentage of the economy, future spending is projected to rise more than 80 percent, driving ever-increasing annual deficit spending and borrowing out of control debt.

According to Stanford economist John Taylor, simply to balance the budget in 2019 would require an

immediate 60 percent across-the-board tax increase. Americans are taxed enough; government needs to stop overspending.

Clearly, eliminating wasteful spending is only the beginning.

Only one third of the federal budget is discretionary and can be cut by Congress in the annual appropriations process.

marks and all foreign aid programs have historically amounted to less than two percent of total federal expenditures. The answer lies in deep and well-targeted spending cuts, a serious reduction in the size of government, adjustments to entitlement programs, and a significant, long-term rebound in the national economy, generating increased revenues.

So, what's next, you might ask?

In February, President Obama offered a fiscal year 2012 budget that barely touched the federal government's massive red ink spending. However, in April the administration partially reversed course by introducing a new budget that would reduce the deficit while also raising taxes.

Meanwhile, House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan, R-Wisconsin, introduced an alternative FY2012 budget plan that finally puts the brakes on government's reckless overspending. Dubbed "The Path to Prosperity" for its goal of putting the budget on a path to balance and paying off major portions of the debt, the Ryan Budget would reduce the federal deficit by \$4.4 trillion over ten years, compared to the president's budget.

The Ryan Budget also reduces government spending by \$6.2 trillion over the next decade, compared to the administration's FY2012 budget.

Rep. Ryan's budget passed the House in April 235-193, but it has a very tough climb in the Senate where there remains strong opposition to the kind of spending reforms we need to rescue our country from catastrophic debt.

While the Ryan budget may not be ultimately adopted by the Senate or embraced by the president, it is an excellent centerpiece for a national dialogue on the major budget reforms this nation must undertake in the coming years if we are to maintain our quality of life in the future.

"Path to Prosperity" – Ryan Budget

Lowers Spending

~Cuts \$6.2 trillion in government spending over the next decade compared to the administration's FY2012 budget

~Eliminates hundreds of duplicative programs, bans earmarks, and curbs corporate welfare

Reduces Debt and Deficits

~Reduces federal deficits by \$4.4 trillion over the next decade compared to administration's budget

Lowers Taxes and Reforms Tax Code

~Eliminates nearly \$800 billion in taxes imposed by the health care law, while keeping taxes low to help grow the economy

~Calls for a simpler, less burdensome tax code for households and small businesses. Lowers tax rates for individuals, businesses and families.

The remaining two-thirds of the federal budget is mandatory spending (Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and net interest on the debt). At present, 84 percent of the federal budget is spent for entitlements, defense, homeland security, and interest on the debt. Any effort to achieve a significant reduction in spending by focusing only on the remaining 16 percent will not achieve our goal of balancing our budget and paying off our debt.

Simply put, we must stop overspending and we must reduce the size of government.

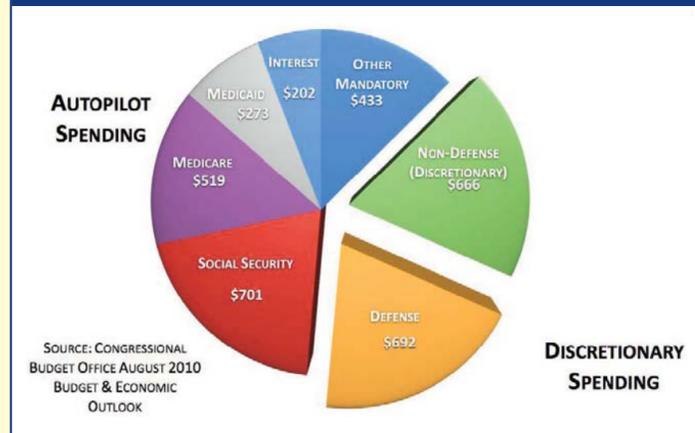
Combined, all congressional ear-



Paul Ryan

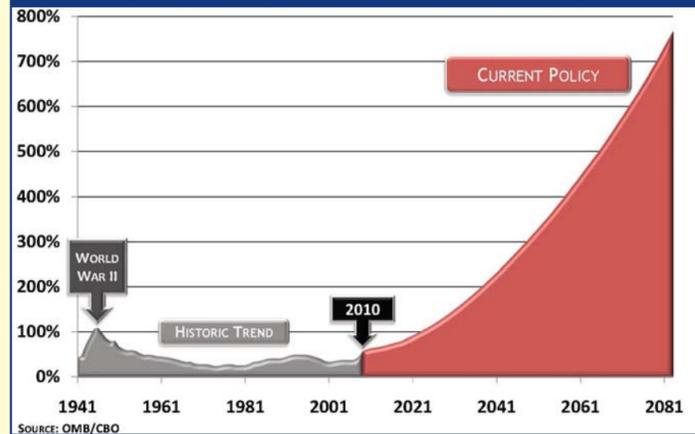
TOTAL SPENDING IN FY2010 = \$3.5 TRILLION

(OUTLAYS IN BILLIONS OF DOLLARS)



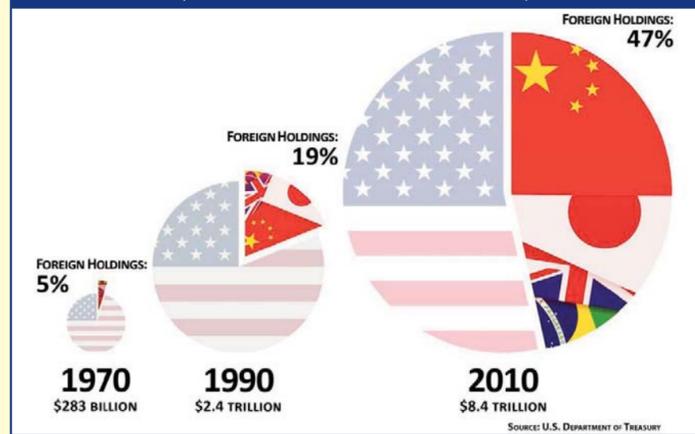
TIDAL WAVE OF DEBT

(DEBT HELD BY PUBLIC AS SHARE OF ECONOMY)



WHO OWNS OUR DEBT?

(DEBT HELD BY PUBLIC, 1970-2010)



New Faces Representing Alabama

The 112th Congress ushered in many historic changes in Washington with perhaps no better place to reflect this than here in Alabama as two women were elected to represent our state in the U.S. House for the first time ever.

Reps. Martha Roby, R-Montgomery (2nd District) and Terri Sewell, D-Birmingham (7th District) made history last November. Until then, only one woman had been elected to serve Alabama in Congress. Elizabeth Bullock Andrews represented the 3rd District from 1972 to 1973 following the death of her husband, the late George Andrews.

At other times, two women have been appointed to serve in the U.S. Senate: Dixie Bibb Graves, the wife of Governor Bibb Graves, was appointed by her husband to serve in the U.S. Senate from 1937 to 1938; and Maryon Pittman Allen served two years in the Senate after her husband, Senator Jim Allen, died in office in 1978.

North Alabama's 5th Congressional District, which includes Huntsville, also elected its first Republican congressman since Reconstruction. Longtime Madison County Commissioner Mo Brooks was sworn in on January 5 along with Reps. Roby and Sewell.

From the Shoals to the Wiregrass — and all points in between — Alabama's seven-person House delegation, along with Senators Shelby and Sessions, intends to continue the long-standing tradition of working as one, regardless of party affiliation, to advance the good of the entire state. We welcome Martha, Terri and Mo to "Team Alabama."



Martha Roby



Terri Sewell



Mo Brooks



112th Congress Gets Down to Business

Last November, the American people sent Washington a clear message to stop out of control spending and end business as usual. Ninety six newly-minted freshmen representatives took the oath of office on January 5, with over half of them coming in with no prior political experience.

The first order of business was the election of John Boehner, R-Ohio, to be Speaker of the House, replacing former Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-California.

Instead of policies promoting bigger government and unsustainable deficit spending, our new focus is on making government finally live within its means.

After fulfilling a pledge to begin the 112th Congress with the reading of the Constitution — something that had never occurred on the House floor in American history — the House followed upon another promise, voting to cut our own operating budget by five percent.

Admittedly, a five percent reduction in Congress's budget is only a small step, but it set into motion a plan to place all federal spending under a microscope, rolling back the overall federal budget — including Congress's own budget — to fiscal year 2008 levels. Concurrently, a major effort is underway to eliminate wasteful, duplicative and outdated programs. For instance, did you know we have 56 different programs in the federal government all charged with improving financial literacy?

Last year, the House failed to pass a budget for the first time since 1974. It also failed to approve even a single funding bill, opting to temporarily fund the government through short-term spending bills called "continuing resolutions."

But Speaker Boehner has taken the House in a new direction, cutting federal spending by amounts not seen in decades.

For years, many conservatives have been saying it's not that Americans aren't taxed enough, it is that the government spends too much. In fact, during the past two years alone, if you count the \$787 billion stimulus bill that promised to keep unemployment below 8 percent, discretionary spending has increased by 84 percent. No South Alabama household or small business I know has seen such a reckless level of runaway spending.

And the problem is worsened when you consider that 42 cents of every dollar we are spending is borrowed money.

The new House has also begun to fulfill its promise to prohibit all Congressional earmarks...no more bridges to nowhere.

While the taxpayer savings from ending earmarks is rather small — about one percent of the overall federal budget — the impact is significant in terms of demonstrating lawmakers' resolve in tackling the budget crisis and ending long-standing and oftentimes wasteful practices.

During the first two weeks of the new Congress, lawmakers also voted to repeal the new health care law — the fulfillment of another promise in our Pledge to America. We've also begun to write new legislation to make health care improvements the public actually wants. No unconstitutional mandates, no one-size-fits-all health care, but needed reforms that will make health care more accessible and affordable, while protecting those with pre-existing conditions.

To be sure, the 112th Congress has a very steep hill to climb in order to restore public confidence. Decades of overspending — by both parties — has created a real mess that must now be cleaned up.

You are invited to join in on the discussion about how to reform our government and cut spending. There are two web sites which allow Americans to directly offer ideas: America Speaking Out (<http://www.americaspeakingout.com/>) and YouCut (<http://majorityleader.gov/YouCut/>).

Please visit them and submit your ideas to Congress.



On January 5, I was sworn in to 112th Congress. My wife, Janée, joins me in the Capitol as Speaker Boehner administers the oath of office.

ThyssenKrupp USA Celebrates Grand Opening

Last December, the rural communities of Calvert and Mt. Vernon played host to an international gathering of special guests, including employees, customers and dignitaries from Germany and elsewhere for the official grand opening of ThyssenKrupp's new \$5 billion state-of-the-art carbon and stainless steel processing facility.

The largest industrial development project in the history of Alabama — and one of the biggest foreign investments ever recorded in the U.S. — ThyssenKrupp's new complex located on the Mobile-Washington County line, has taken three years to build and nearly 30,000 workers to complete.

Already, some 2,000 full-time workers are employed at the 3,700 acre facility, with another 700 scheduled to be hired when both the carbon and stainless steel facilities are fully operational. Over the next 20 years, approximately 38,000 indirect jobs are projected to be created.

ThyssenKrupp Steel USA will eventually be supplied with three million metric tons of carbon steel slabs per year manufactured at the TK facility in Sepetiba, Brazil. The massive steel slabs are being shipped to the Port of Mobile and then transported by barge up river to the company's terminal.

ThyssenKrupp shipped the first of its cold-rolled carbon steel to customers in July 2010.

Raw materials for ThyssenKrupp Stainless USA are currently being supplied by plants in Europe. In the future, the stainless steel slabs will be produced in an on-site melt shop in Calvert, which is presently under construction. Part of the stainless hot-rolled steel produced there will later be supplied to ThyssenKrupp's plant in Mexico.

During remarks delivered at the grand opening, ThyssenKrupp's immediate past Chairman, Dr. Ekkehard Schulz, noted the company has made a major long-term investment in Southwest Alabama, which will only continue to grow.

According to Dr. Schulz, "ThyssenKrupp has enjoyed excellent support here from government and industry associations and a friendly reception from the people. We look forward to a long-term partnership with Alabama and the region of Mobile."

A warm South Alabama welcome to our new friends from Germany.

Promoting South Alabama's Tourist-Related Economy



South Alabama is home to a wide variety of industries. Most recently, steel processing and Navy shipbuilding have added to our economic landscape.

As we seek to grow and diversify our area economy, travel and tourism are, and will continue to be, a significant part of our past and our future.

For the next two years, Rep. Sam Farr, D-California, and I have been selected to co-chair the Congressional Travel and Tourism Caucus. The Caucus educates lawmakers and others in government about the sizeable economic benefits of tourism.

The U.S. Travel Association estimates that tourism and travel contribute more than \$700 billion to the national economy and employ more than 7.7 million people.

According to the Alabama Department of Tourism, tourist and travel spending in Southwest Alabama totaled \$3.2 billion during 2009 — one third of the state's total tourist dollars. Unfortunately, the following year ushered in a catastrophic Gulf oil spill that caused nearly a million tourists to avoid Alabama's beaches.

In 2011, businesses all across South Alabama's economic spectrum are still reeling from the spill's impact on tourism. Even local governments and school systems are suffering from a decline in tax revenues that tourists helped to generate.

Recovery from this tragedy will require more than oil spill claims payments.

We must have a renewed emphasis on tourism promotion across the nation and in the halls of Congress, and I look forward to working with the Travel and Tourism Caucus to focus attention on the vital role of tourism jobs for South Alabama and America.

Austal Redefines Mobile

South Alabama Launches New Shipbuilding Jobs

When Australian-owned Austal USA first set up shop along the Mobile River just over a decade ago, the small company was full of optimism about breaking into the U.S. military shipbuilding business.

Looking back, it seemed at the time to be a David vs. Goliath match-up with the newcomer not only challenging long established big-name American defense contractors but daring to defy conventional shipbuilding practices by offering a revolutionary new aluminum hull trimaran design.

"Long-shot" was not in the Austal vocabulary however. What the upstart lacked in personnel — with barely a handful of employees — it made up in ambition, skillful planning and state of the art design.

Fast forward to 2011.

After impressive successes in the development of a U.S. Navy prototype Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) and Joint High Speed Vessel (JHSV), the sea-faring equivalent of a cargo aircraft, Austal has grown to 1,800 employees. However, the real pay-off occurred in the waning days of 2010 when Austal scored a lucrative contract to build up to ten of their cutting-edge shallow water combat ships for the Navy.

The \$3.5 billion deal has been called a game changer for the once little shipbuilder, which will soon double its local workforce to become one of Mobile's largest employers.

Austal's rise has come to represent more than just promise for the Mobile area economy. Its bold success has redefined the city, imbuing a can-do spirit that is catching on across the region.

Resembling a seagoing version of a stealth fighter, Austal's LCS is becoming a symbol of Mobile's waterfront, and the company's current expansion is rekindling thoughts of the city's World War II days when Liberty ships were proudly built locally.

On March 15, Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus visited Mobile and toured Austal's innovative aluminum shipyard, saluting its workforce and announcing the names of the next two ships to be designed and built in Mobile — the *USS Jackson* and the *USS Montgomery*.

Austal's seasoned workers already handed the Navy the keys to one new LCS ship, the *USS Independence*, back in January 2010, and another, the *USS Coronado*, is currently under construction at the company's shipyard.

Austal's success is welcome news for South Alabama and a turning point for the long-term economic future of our area. It's also a win for the Navy, which takes ownership of an impressive new class of combat ships made right here in Mobile.



Navy Secretary Ray Mabus joined Senator Jeff Sessions, Mobile Mayor Sam Jones, Austal President Joe Rella, and me in Mobile in March to announce the names of the next two LCS ships to be built by Austal.



In addition to its current contract to build up to ten more LCS ships for the Navy, Austal also won the contract to design and build a fleet of new high-speed aluminum ships for both the Army and Navy. Known as the Joint High Speed Vessel (JHSV), the new ships are specifically designed to shuttle hundreds of troops and tons of cargo around a theater of operations.

Fairhope Teacher Receives National Award

Fairhope High School teacher Megan O'Neill was one of only 100 teachers nationwide to be given the 2010 Presidential Award for Excellence in Math and Science Teaching. The only Alabama teacher selected for the White House honor, Ms. O'Neill travelled to Washington, DC in January to personally receive the recognition from President Obama. During her trip to the nation's capital, she visited my office to discuss local education issues and the work of her high school aqua-science classes. Megan's dedication is a testament to the fine work of Alabama's school teachers.



A Special Day for South Alabama Veterans

Last September, I was once again honored to welcome nearly 90 World War II veterans from Southwest Alabama to the National World War II Memorial in Washington.

Honor Flight South Alabama left Mobile in the early morning, arriving on the National Mall by noon. Accompanied by then-Governor Bob Riley, the South Alabama World War II veterans toured the magnificent memorial dedicated to their service and laid a wreath at the Alabama column.



I was proud to welcome nearly 90 WWII veterans from South Alabama as they toured the World War II Memorial last September.

As part of their visit, I presented the veterans with a flag flown over the U.S. Capitol as well as a tribute honoring their historic and emotional journey.

Senators Richard Shelby and Jeff Sessions joined me in discussing our nation's continuing commitment to all our military personnel and veterans.

Without exception, each of these patriotic Alabamians answered their country's call decades ago, many while they were still teenagers and, in so doing, became part of what has been called the "greatest generation." And to a person, they are all heroes — a unique band of Americans who stood shoulder to shoulder to defend America's liberty during one of the greatest tests our nation — and the world — has ever faced.

Even more than that, these men and women are liberators. They were part of one of the most noble struggles in history, freeing millions from the terrible yoke of oppression in foreign lands and protecting the American way of life for their families and their countrymen back home.

This was the fourth Honor Flight from South Alabama to have visited Washington. For many of these veterans, this was their first trip to see their memorial. It is a very special experience and a fitting way to honor their remarkable service.

Congratulations 2011 Service Academy Nominees

Every spring, it is an honor for me, as your representative in Congress, to nominate qualified young men and women throughout South Alabama to be considered for an appointment to one of America's elite service academies.

The quality of education a student can attain at the Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs, CO, the Military Academy at West Point, NY, the Naval Academy at Annapolis, MD, the Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, NY, and the Coast Guard Academy at New London, CT, is among the finest in the world. Many academy graduates — in fact too many to list — go on to become the next generation of leaders for our country.

This year, I have nominated 22 high school seniors to be considered for an appointment to the Class of 2015. Those who are ultimately selected will begin their school year this July.

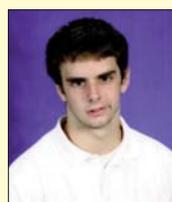
Currently, our office is accepting applications for the class of 2016, which will enter the academies in the summer of 2012. Interested students should consider applying for a nomination now. The applicant's nomination file must be completed in my office by December 1, 2011.

For those interested in learning more about the academies, please contact Brooks Chew in my Mobile office at (251) 690-2811 or 1-800-288-8721. Information is also on my web site at <http://bonner.house.gov>.

Congratulations to the following students who have received nominations to the U.S. service academies for the Class of 2015!



Michael Bentley
Mobile
Home School



David Bertagnoli
Daphne
Spanish Fort High School



Chris Boudreaux
Mobile
St. Paul's Episcopal School



John Carl
Orange Beach
Gulf Shores High School



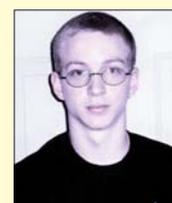
Blaize Dunn
Chunchula
U.S. Air Force
Preparatory School



Kendall Gibson
Mobile
St. Paul's Episcopal School



Margaret Harkness
Mobile
St. Paul's Episcopal School



Daniel Herring
Saraland
Alabama School of Math and Science



John Jarreau
Theodore
Theodore High School



Quintin Howard
Mobile
U.S. Military Academy
Preparatory School



Jarrod Mack
Silverhill
Robertsdale High School



Tyler Martenstein
Fairhope
Fairhope High School



Patricia Neno
Mobile
McGill-Toolen Catholic High School



Sidney Odum
Robertsdale
Marion Military Institute



Chris Pierce
Daphne
University of Alabama



John Savell
Mobile
University of Alabama



Clayton Stanley
Theodore
Murphy High School



Wes Stringfellow
Wilmer
McGill-Toolen Catholic High School



Trey Williams
Mobile
Baker High School

Not pictured:
Wendell Johnson,
Mobile, Davidson
High School; David
Watters, Chunchula,
Satsuma High
School; and
Kyneesha Womack,
Chunchula, Satsuma
High School.

Student Government Day Attracts State Leaders

Recently, my staff and I hosted a town meeting of sorts in Mobile. Attendees included local, state and federal leaders as well as some of the most prominent members of our local media.

What was unique about this event, however, was who got to ask the questions.

In March, some 200 student leaders from across South Alabama gathered on the beautiful campus of Spring Hill College to fire questions at Lt. Gov. Kay Ivey, Speaker of the Alabama House Mike Hubbard, Mobile County Chief Assistant District Attorney Deborah Tillman and U.S. Attorney Kenyen Brown.

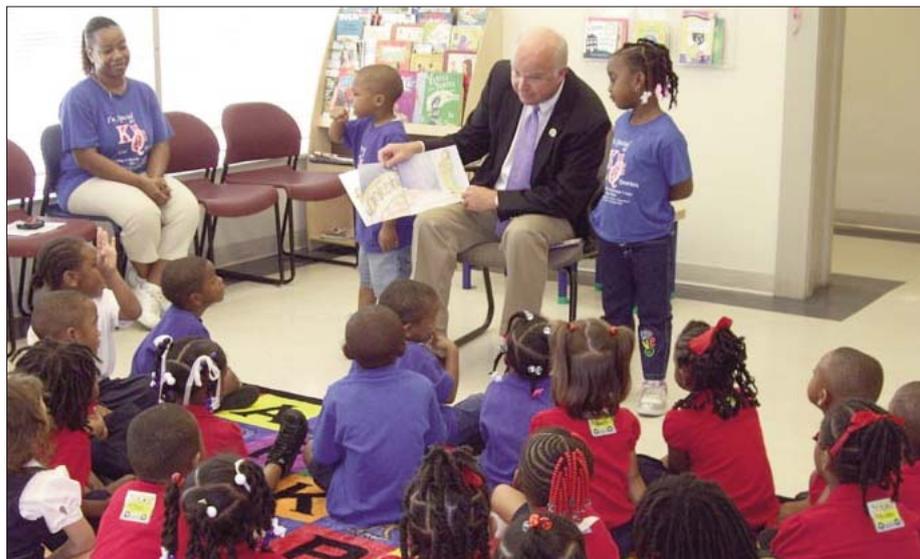
It got really interesting when the roles were reversed for some of our local media personalities such as *Mobile Press-Register* Political Editor George Talbot, WALA-TV 10 Anchor Denise Ligon, and FM Talk106.5 radio personalities Wayne Gardner and Sean Sullivan who took turns answering questions from the students.

This year's Workshop for High School Leaders — the 26th annual event dating back to when my predecessor, former Congressman Sonny Callahan, started the program back in 1985 — was particularly spirited. All in all, the students posed some tough questions to both the government officials as well as the media. Special thanks goes, once again, to this year's moderator, longtime Fox10 anchor Bob Grip, as well as to all the students and teachers who attended.



Students from UMS-Wright were among the many South Alabama high schools participating in our annual Workshop for High School Leaders on March 25, 2011.

Reach Out and Read



Each year I look forward to participating in the Reach Out and Read program with children from South Alabama. Last year, I discussed the importance of reading to several dozen Reach Out and Read students at the Mobile County Health Department Clinic in Eight Mile. Reach Out and Read is a national, non-profit organization that promotes early literacy by making books a routine part of pediatric care. It prepares America's youngest children to succeed in school by partnering with doctors who give free books to their young patients and encourages families to read together.

(Photo credit: Mobile County Health Dept)

Repeal and Replace the Health Care Law

On January 19, 2011, the House voted 245 to 189 to repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act which President Obama signed into law in March 2010. Even without support from the Senate or the White House, we will continue our effort to block the implementation of the massive new health care bureaucracy.

This spring, House committees are drafting legislation to deny the administration access to various financing used to pay for its year-old health care law.

While our efforts to stop the overreach of government-run health care continue, we have also set in motion the process to replace it with market-based reforms that build on the best of our current health care system.

The new House majority has outlined several goals which our new health care reform plan should meet in order to lower costs, increase access to quality care and strengthen the doctor-patient relationship. They include:

Medical Liability Reform

Skyrocketing medical liability insurance rates have distorted the practice of medicine, routinely forcing doctors to order costly and often unnecessary tests to protect themselves from lawsuits, often referred to as "defensive medicine." We will enact common-sense medical liability reforms to lower costs, rein in junk lawsuits and curb defensive medicine.

Purchase Health Insurance Across State Lines

Americans residing in a state with expensive health insurance plans are locked into those plans and do not currently have an opportunity to choose a lower cost option that best meets their needs. An alternative, supported by many conservatives, would allow individuals to buy health care coverage outside the state in which they live.

Health Savings Accounts Expansion

Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) are a popular way to provide cost effective health insurance to those who might otherwise go uninsured.

We will improve HSAs by making it easier for patients with high-deductible health plans to use them to obtain access to quality care. Unfortunately, the new health care law currently prevents the use of these savings accounts to purchase over-the-counter medicine.

Insurance Access for Patients with Pre-Existing Conditions

Health care should be accessible for all, regardless of pre-existing conditions or past illnesses. There have been many bills introduced to expand state high-risk pools and reduce the cost of coverage. We will make it illegal for an insurance company to deny coverage to someone with prior coverage on the basis of a pre-existing condition, eliminate annual and lifetime spending caps, and prevent insurers from dropping your coverage just because you get sick. And we will give incentives to states to develop innovative programs that lower premiums and reduce the number of uninsured Americans.

The Patient Protection & Affordable Care Act



111th Congress of the United States

H.R. 3590

HOW TO CONTACT ME...

DC Office:

2236 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-4931
Fax: (202) 225-0562

Mobile Office:

11 N. Water St.
Suite 15290
Mobile, AL 36602
Phone: (251) 690-2811
Fax: (251) 690-2815
Toll Free: (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>