

*This Week in Washington*



WITH CONGRESSMAN  
JO BONNER

### Traveling the District

Last week, several members of my staff and I traveled to all six counties of Alabama's First District to hold twelve town hall meetings, bringing our total to 185 meetings over the past five and a half years.

I am extremely appreciative of all those who took time out of their busy schedules to come out and visit with us, many of whom provided insightful comments and tough questions.

Many of you expressed concern about the Air Force tanker contract and the outcome of the competition.

At the writing of this column, we were awaiting Defense Secretary Robert Gates to release the final amended request for proposal (RFP). As we know all too well, Mobile has been on a

journey toward assembling big jet aircraft for over three years.

As someone who has worked alongside our state, county, and local elected officials throughout this process, our team remains solidly committed to bringing the assembly and manufacture of big jet aircraft to south Alabama.

While the tanker was certainly a prevalent topic at the town hall meetings, the number one issue raised was the exorbitant price of energy. The \$2.65 per gallon we were paying this time last year seems like an absolute bargain compared to the \$3.72 many of us are paying now.

Without question, more must be done to bring fuel prices down – and more must be done to increase the production of energy here at home. Our economy has become increasingly reliant on foreign sources of energy, and we have not done enough to move domestic production forward.

Many of you asked why this Congress has chosen not to help lower the price of energy by expanding our refining capacity, increasing domestic production, or exploring new alternative sources of energy.

Incredibly, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi adjourned the House of Representatives on August 4 without allowing the House to vote on a bipartisan, comprehensive energy plan.

Several Members took to the House floor speaking out in opposition in a darkened House chamber without microphones. While I was hearing from so many of you at these town hall meetings, some of my colleagues continued speaking out on the House floor calling on Speaker Pelosi to bring the House back into session.

Next week, I plan to return to Washington and join my colleagues in demanding that Congress reconvene before September and pass legislation that will make America independent of foreign oil.

#### Interning – A Valuable Experience

This summer 18 young Alabamians interned on my staff in Washington, Mobile, and Baldwin County. It was heartening for both my staff and me to spend time with these outstanding individuals and see firsthand that the future leaders of our country are top notch.

Each student completed a four week internship and assisted in the daily operations of the office.

Thirteen students spent the summer in our nation's capital working in my Washington, D.C. office where they researched issues, and conducted tours of the U.S. Capitol.

The students also had opportunities to attend congressional hearings, lectures, and seminars. Washington interns were able to work in one of the most fascinating, interesting and powerful cities in the world.

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

An internship is an important complement to a student's academic career. The hands-on experience gained as an intern will prove valuable in the work force.

My office will begin accepting applications this fall for the summer of 2009. For more information please contact Suzannah Weeks in my Washington D.C. office at 202-225-4931 or visit the student section of my website.

My staff and I work for you. If we can ever be of service, do not hesitate to call my office toll free at 1-800-288-8721.

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*For release the week of Monday, August 18, 2008. For more information please contact Mike Lewis at (202)225-4931.*