



CONGRESSMAN
JOHN SARBANES
REPRESENTING MARYLAND'S 3RD CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT



The Sarbanes Standard

Summer 2009

Dear Friend,

I want to update you on the agenda in the House of Representatives and my efforts on behalf of Maryland's Third District. I appreciate that many of you have taken the time to contact my office to express your views about the challenges facing our Nation and I look forward to maintaining this dialogue as we move forward. The economic crisis is foremost on everyone's mind, and in the Congress, we've worked with the new Administration to stabilize our financial markets and initiate a recovery plan for our economy. We've also carefully analyzed the causes of the economic crisis, so we can better regulate financial markets and prevent the actions of a few from impacting our entire economy in the future. Of course we must continue to monitor the spending of taxpayer money and I applaud the work of the Inspector General who has initiated investigations that seek to prosecute fraud and prevent other abuses among recipients of taxpayer assistance.

As I tour my district, I continue to be impressed by the determination of our citizens to push through this crisis. The American people have an amazing resourcefulness and resilience and it is on full display.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), seeks to stimulate our economy in the near term, assist working families that are struggling to make ends meet in these difficult times, and set the stage for long term economic growth. By putting people to work rebuilding our Nation's critical infrastructure and investing in new energy technologies, we are forging stronger communities and a more secure America. I have developed a manual to explain the legislation and guide individuals and small businesses that are interested in accessing the tools authorized by the bill that can be found on my web site www.sarbanes.house.gov. You also may call my office at 410-832-8890 to have us mail you a copy.

Financial Markets and Regulatory Reform

In order to unlock our credit markets, which are badly damaged and stunting business activity, President Obama has proposed a public-private partnership to identify and quarantine the toxic assets that have crippled our economy. He has also called for a new regulatory framework that adequately protects consumers, investors, and taxpayers. I look forward to considering legislation in the Congress that implements many of these changes in the near future. By ending the anything goes culture on Wall Street, we can restore confidence in our financial markets; stem the tide of home foreclosures around the country; and ensure that credit once again flows freely to qualified borrowers. Going forward, we must engage in meaningful oversight so that in the future the taxpayer is not forced to pay for the bad decisions and reckless gambling of a few on Wall Street.

Health Care and Energy Challenges

On the Energy and Commerce Committee, we are tackling health care reform. I am convinced that long term economic security will only come from fixing our broken health care system. I have participated in a series of hearings to examine the gaps in health care coverage in our country and we plan to consider legislation to reform the current system this summer.

I also believe that our energy policies and climate change are at the center of our nation's economic, national security, and environmental challenges. It is more important than ever for America to adopt an aggressive strategy to develop alternative sources of energy. Only by ending our addiction to oil will we be able to retain our competitive advantage as a nation and ensure a promising future for our children. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act made a down payment on a new strategy to invest in renewable energy sources. It is my hope that through targeted investment and common sense energy policy, we can facilitate private investment in this sector and make our economy the first to move away from carbon based energy sources.

Vet Corps

As we work to find a path to recovery, I have also been working on several other initiatives in the Congress. I introduced H.R. 1401, the Veterans Engaged for Tomorrow (VET) Corps Act, to establish a service corps of veterans dedicated to serving other veterans and the greater community. The mission of VET Corps is to provide veterans with a new means to serve their country; put veterans back to work and help train them for a civilian career; and provide services for disabled or older veterans, as well as the greater public. A 2007 Department of Veterans Affairs' survey found that veterans have a relatively high unemployment rate with returning veterans experiencing rates as high as 18 percent. The economic crisis has only compounded this problem. In addition, dangerous new battlefield threats such as improvised explosive devices have left many with severe injuries. Advanced medical care saved their lives, but left many with disabilities that will significantly change their lifestyles going forward. Although we can never fully repay those who serve in our Nation's armed forces, VET Corps is one way to ensure we take care of our veterans when they return home.

I am pleased that this legislation passed in March as part of broader legislation to reauthorize our Nation's service programs (H.R. 1388) and was signed into law by the President on April 21, 2009.

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No Child Left Inside

I introduced H.R. 2054, the No Child Left Inside (NCLI) Act, which would establish environmental education programs that promote healthier children and communities. NCLI seeks to improve education in public schools and to protect our environment by creating a new environmental education grant program, providing teacher training for environmental education, and including environmental education as an authorized activity under the Fund for the Improvement of Education. NCLI also requires states that participate in the environmental education grant program to develop a K-12 plan to ensure environmental literacy.

Robust environmental education is a down payment for success in education, energy and environmental policy, and health care because it will help grow the next generation of scientists, promote environmental stewardship, and encourage Americans to live healthier lifestyles. Environmental education is critical for helping young Americans make the complex conceptual connections between economic prosperity, lifestyle choices and energy use, environmental health and their own well being. In addition, research shows that environmental education has a positive impact not only on student achievement in science, but also in reading, math, and social studies. NCLI is supported by a large and diverse coalition of nearly 1300 organizations across the country and it is my hope that it will become law in this session of Congress.

Telework

I also worked with Congressmen Frank Wolf (VA) and Gerald Connolly (VA) to introduce the Telework Improvements Act of 2009. The Telework Improvements Act encourages a uniform and consistent telework policy across the federal government, while imposing strict oversight and accountability that will ensure the success of this pragmatic yet innovative workforce management policy. I am pleased to report that Office of Personnel Management has taken recommendations from this legislation and made it the policy of the new administration.

By promoting federal telework, we can mitigate congestion in high-traffic areas such as the National Capital Region – reducing carbon emissions from vehicles and improving the quality of life for all commuters. Each day, thousands of federal employees and other commuters in the region sit in traffic gridlock that results in lost productivity, less time spent with families, and pollution that poisons our air and alters our climate. If we offer an innovative alternative so that some in the federal workforce can avoid these commutes through telework, not only will we improve their quality of life, we will relieve the overall strain on our regional transportation infrastructure and improve the daily commute for all area workers.

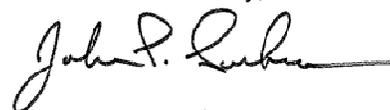
Chesapeake Bay

Finally, I continue to work hard to turn the tide in our efforts to clean up the Chesapeake Bay. The Chesapeake Bay is our Nation's largest estuary and, in many ways, the soul of our state. It is a national environmental treasure and an economic catalyst as it pertains to Maryland's tourism and seafood industries. I* recently introduced the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network Continuing Authorization Act, which will allow the National Park Service to continue to play an important role in Bay cleanup.* The Gateways program provides meaningful experiences and fosters citizen stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay by helping to maintain parks, wildlife refuges, historic sites, museums, and other important sites throughout the Bay watershed. Without individual responsibility and widespread engagement by the 16 million people who live in the Bay watershed, we can never successfully clean up the Bay. The goal of the Gateways program is to foster this sort of engagement.

I've also introduced the Chesapeake Bay Science, Education, and Ecosystems Enhancement Act of 2009, legislation which would reauthorize the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Chesapeake Bay program. The NOAA Chesapeake Bay office provides vital scientific research and data, habitat restoration and environmental education – all of which play a major role in Bay restoration. In addition to reauthorizing NOAA's authority to engage in these activities, my legislation enhances the Chesapeake Bay Interpretative Buoy System, which provides real-time weather and environmental information like wind speed, temperature, and wave height to the public, especially boaters and researchers. It bolsters the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Education and Training Program (BWET) to provide valuable hands-on environmental education and teach young people about how their every day actions affect the Bay. Finally, the bill expands NOAA's aquaculture technical assistance programs beyond native oysters to include fish and shellfish aquaculture. The bill will strengthen the NOAA Chesapeake Bay offices' contribution to restoration of this national treasure and help ensure the continued economic viability of the region's fisheries.

I appreciate that many of you have taken the time to contact my office about these issues and I look forward to maintaining this dialogue. I will continue to keep you updated on my work in the Congress. If you would like to sign up to see more regular updates from my office, visit www.sarbanes.house.gov or call my office at 410-832-8890 to be added to our mailing.

Sincerely,



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