



CONGRESSMAN JIM SENSENBRENNER NEWS FROM CONGRESS

NUMBER 158 -- APRIL 2002

The War on Terrorism

Our nation is at war.

When the President declared war on terrorism last year, he was quite clear about the fact that this would be a long battle. He explained that Afghanistan, specifically, was not the target, but that this war is directed toward the terrorists who include members of the Taliban and al-Qaida hiding in the hills of that country, and all around the world - including right here, in the heart of America.

As part of the war effort, President Bush has asked us all to reconsider our priorities. For his part, the President has had to make some difficult decisions - such as with his budget proposal offered earlier this year. In the President's budget, growth in spending for programs outside of defense and homeland security is held to around 2% - roughly the increase in the cost of living. To address our urgent need to fight terrorism and prevent future attacks, President Bush's approximately \$2.13 trillion budget includes the largest increase in defense spending in twenty years. For those who think this increase in spending to prevent attacks is far too steep, it is important to note that defense spending today makes up a far smaller portion of the budget than it has in the past.

In the area of homeland security, the budget focuses on four major areas: bioterrorism, emergency responders, airport and border security, and improved intelligence. In his State of the Union address, the President talked about the importance of homeland security, and as Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, I expect to review these programs closely since they largely fall under the jurisdiction of my committee.

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Restructuring the INS

It has been clear for some time now that the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) is probably the most dysfunctional agency in the federal government. Recent events have only made this more evident.

Since the September 11th attacks, the media has widely reported that only 13 of the 19 terrorists who hijacked four commercial jets on that fateful Tuesday entered the United States legally on tourist, business, or student visas. Of those who came in legally, at least three allegedly remained in the U.S. illegally after their visas had expired.

In response to last year's events and the numerous problems often associated with the INS, on November 6, 2001, together with my colleague Representative George Gekas, I introduced H.R. 3231, the Immigration Reform and Accountability Act of 2001.

The goal of this bill is to create a better immigration agency with clear missions, more accountability, and obvious chains of command. The INS presently fails both immigrants and the American people. It does not carry out its

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The War on Terrorism

To that end, I visited Camp X-Ray at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, (see photo below) as part of a fact-finding mission for potential Judiciary Committee legislation. The visit allowed me to observe how the prisoners were being handled, and to meet with the soldiers charged with the weighty responsibility of guarding the Taliban and al-Qaida prisoners. During the trip, it was made evident that the detainees are well cared for and their treatment follows the rules of the Geneva Convention. They are receiving medical screening and medical care, and appropriate accommodations have been made to address their spiritual needs.



Sensenbrenner visits Cuba as part of a fact finding trip for potential House Judiciary Committee legislation.

There are many ways that Americans can be of assistance while we are at war. We can volunteer by enlisting, or by lending a helping hand to those directly affected by the war and last September's events. The main thing to remember is that this is an important time in American history - it is a time for us all to come together in defense of our nation, and rally in defense of freedom. ■

Recovering from the Recession

While the war on terrorism has rightly jumped to the top of the national agenda, an equally important goal of Congress and the President is strengthening the economy. Toward the end of the last administration, the U.S. began a period of economic downturn. High energy prices, a falling stock market, a decline in investment and a deteriorating manufacturing sector, contributed to a sharp drop in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth that began during the fall of 2000. When President Bush took office, he made it a priority to address this situation, and we can already see growth in each of these areas.

Last year, Congress passed a tax relief bill that provided most Americans with relief in the form of an income tax rebate - and this year, nearly everyone will qualify for more relief. Despite seemingly endless rhetoric to the contrary by the "anti-tax cut" crowd, the President's plan provides its largest percentage reduction in income tax burdens for the lowest income group - those who make less than \$30,000 a year.

With a strong, growing economy, we can fund our efforts to combat terrorism, reduce unemployment, and protect vital programs such as Social Security. The tax relief legislation passed and signed into law last year, was a good first step to help get our economy growing again, and its benefits will be felt for years down the road. However, the job losses and uncertainty following the September 11th attacks created the need for further stimulus.

Recognizing this need, I supported the two other economic stimulus packages passed by the House of Representatives last year. But the Senate never acted on those bills, even though they had strong support in the House and the backing of the administration. Senate Majority Leader Daschle blocked consideration of the bills, and by allowing them to languish, arguably slowed our country's recovery time.

Finally, on March 7, after the House passed, with my support, a **fourth** bill to help create jobs, the Senate also passed it the next day. On March 9, the President signed H.R. 3090 into law. While this is an encouraging step, it's a small one. H.R. 3090 is merely a shell of the other House-passed bills because although it includes measures to help the unemployed and create some jobs, it does not include the tax provisions that could truly stimulate the economy.

Despite the Senate's general inaction, we can already see a difference in our economy today when compared to a few months ago. However, as has historically been the case, Wisconsin is at the tail end of this recovery partially because of its large manufacturing labor force. But there are positive signs, such as January's

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Restructuring the INS

law enforcement or service mission well. It fails to treat the good guys fairly and keep the bad guys out. H.R. 3231 abolishes the INS as we know it and creates two new bureaus with clear lines of responsibility, one to better enforce our immigration laws, and another to better deal with US citizens and legal aliens needing proper documentations. Each bureau will be headed by directors with at least ten years experience in their respective fields. This will address our country's need for an agency - headed by an expert in customer service - that gives legal immigrants and citizens the service they expect and deserve. It will also address our country's need for a dedicated law enforcement agency - headed by an expert - that deals with border security, and criminal and illegal aliens. Finally, we will be able to crack down on **illegal** immigration.

Additionally, H.R. 3231 requires the Attorney General to establish an Internet-based system that permits people with applications filed with the INS to access online information about the status of their applications. This would cut down on the daily lines of people waiting at district offices and decrease the number of phone calls made to the INS.

H.R. 3231 offers a practical blueprint to fix the INS. With good management and leadership, INS employees will be able to perform the way they should. You can expect the House Judiciary Committee, of which I am Chairman, to schedule hearings on this bill soon, and I hope to be able to bring a bill to the House floor for a vote shortly thereafter. ■

Town Hall Meetings and Office Hours provide me the chance to hear your views on the issues before Congress or to help you with problems you may be experiencing in dealing with a federal agency. I look forward to seeing you at the next meeting nearest your home. Please contact my district office if you require special accommodations to attend.

OFFICE HOURS

Monday, April 1

8:00 a.m. Nashotah Village Hall
8:45 a.m. Merton Village Hall
10:15 a.m. Sussex Village Hall
11:00 a.m. Butler Village Hall
11:45 a.m. Lannon Village Hall

Thursday, April 4

8:30 a.m. Johnson Creek Village Hall
9:15 a.m. Helenville Firehall
10:00 a.m. Sullivan Village Hall
11:00 a.m. Wales Village Hall
12:30 p.m. Genesee Town Hall
1:15 p.m. North Prairie Village Hall
2:00 p.m. Eagle Village Hall
2:45 p.m. Palmyra Village Hall
3:45 p.m. Dousman Village Hall

Friday, April 5

8:30 a.m. Addison Town Hall
9:15 a.m. Kewaskum Village Hall
10:00 a.m. Newburg Village Hall
10:45 a.m. Fredonia Village Hall
11:30 a.m. Belgium Village Hall
1:00 p.m. Saukville Village Hall
2:00 p.m. Jackson Village Hall
2:45 p.m. Slinger Village Hall

Friday, April 19

8:00 a.m. Burnett Town Hall
8:45 a.m. Waupun City Hall
9:30 a.m. Brownsville Village Hall
10:15 a.m. Kekoskee Village Hall
11:00 a.m. Lomira Village Hall
12:30 p.m. Theresa Village Hall
1:15 p.m. Rubicon Town Hall
2:00 p.m. Ashippun Town Hall

Monday, April 22

8:30 a.m. Ixonia Town Hall
9:15 a.m. Lebanon Town Hall
10:00 a.m. Neosho Village Hall
10:45 a.m. Iron Ridge Village Hall
11:30 a.m. Hustisford Village Hall
1:00 p.m. Clyman Village Hall
1:45 p.m. Lowell Village Hall
2:30 p.m. Reeseville Village Hall
3:15 p.m. Waterloo City Hall

Friday, April 26

8:30 a.m. Howard's Grove Village Hall
9:15 a.m. Kohler Village Hall
10:00 a.m. Oostburg State Bank
10:45 a.m. Adell Senior Center
11:30 a.m. Random Lake Village Hall
1:00 p.m. Cedar Grove Library

TOWN HALL MEETINGS

Thursday, April 4

7:00 p.m. Thiensville Village Hall

Saturday, April 6

9:00 a.m. Oconomowoc City Hall
1:00 p.m. Port Washington Police Dept.

Sunday, April 7

12:00 p.m. Delafield Town Hall

Saturday, April 20

9:00 a.m. Pewaukee City Hall
1:00 p.m. Hartford City Hall

Sunday, April 21

12:00 p.m. Grafton Village Hall

Monday, April 22

7:00 p.m. Mequon Police Dept.

Saturday, April 27

1:00 p.m. Hartland Village Hall

Sunday, April 28

7:00 p.m. Fort Atkinson City Hall

Monday, April 29

7:00 p.m. Sheboygan Mead Library

Saturday, May 18

9:00 a.m. Horicon City Hall
1:00 p.m. Germantown Village Hall

Sunday, May 19

12:00 p.m. Richfield Town Hall

Tuesday, May 28

7:00 p.m. West Bend City Hall

Wednesday, May 29

7:00 p.m. Cedarburg City Hall

Thursday, May 30

7:00 p.m. Brookfield Safety Building

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Recovering from the Recession

record home sales in the Midwest, which indicates strong consumer confidence. This upswing in our economy can be largely attributed to the President's tax relief plan passed last summer.

Now that H.R. 3090 has been signed into law, the next step to helping our economy will be to focus on the budget. Congress needs to support the President's budget plan, which includes significant increases in funding for our military, airport, and other homeland security measures. This will make America more secure, allowing our economy to grow. Even with these added expenses, according to the Office of Management and Budget, the U.S. could have an almost balanced budget this year. Considering what this country has been through recently, this would be a remarkable feat! However, in order for this to occur, Congress will need to maintain its course, and not increase funding for programs that are not at the top of our nation's priority list.

Since control of the Senate changed hands last year, it has failed to act on many important bills passed by the House. Although it did eventually pass a bill to help create jobs, it's unconscionable that it took so long. I hope the Senate works with - not against - the House and the President in the budget debate, so that Americans can take care of themselves and their families and get back to work! ■

*To write about issues
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Congressman

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