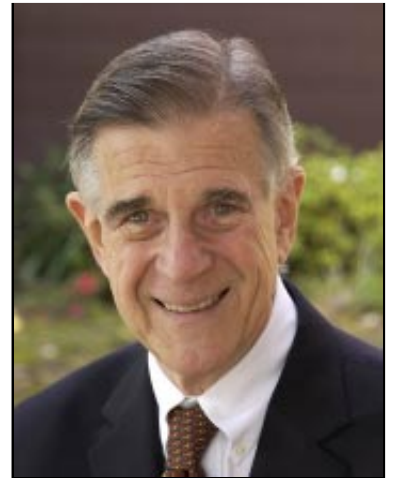


congressman

**PETE
STARK**

**13th District
107th Congress**

UPDATE



Washington, D.C.
July 2002

Dear Friends:

As the 107th Congress looks to complete its work this Fall, it is clear we need to refocus on our priorities. Having spent trillions on tax cuts and defense, the President and House Republicans have done little on issues that make a real difference in our daily lives.

At town meetings I hold throughout the 13th Congressional District, I hear that prescription drugs aren't affordable; that quality health care is out of reach of those who need it most; that our schools don't have the resources to provide our kids a world class education; and that we're not doing enough to protect our environment. I'm working hard to make sure these priorities are not forgotten. This newsletter contains updates on several of these topics.

In the next few months, Congress will vote on the issue of homeland security. Combining several regulatory agencies into a huge new beauracracy doesn't seem to promise much protection from future terror attacks.

As Congress works with the President to bolster our safety, we must reaffirm our commitment to civil liberties. We should never be forced to choose between security and our rights as citizens. No challenges we face justify denying any American the freedoms that define us as a nation.

Please join me at a town meeting Saturday, August 3, 2002. For the most up-to-date information about Congress, visit my website at www.house.gov/stark.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pete".

PETE STARK

THE RESULTS ARE IN . . .

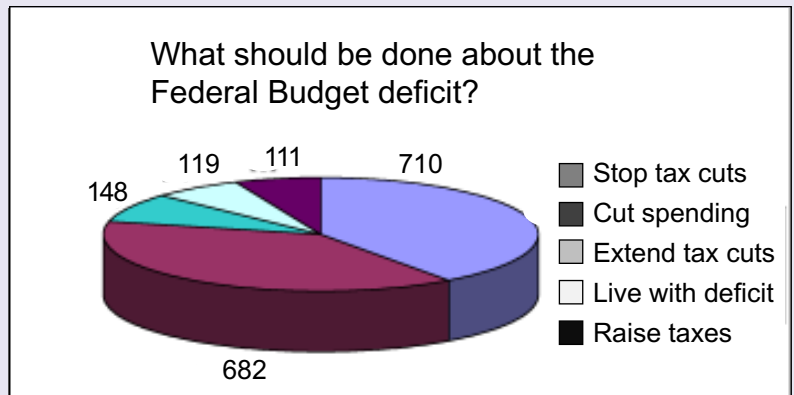
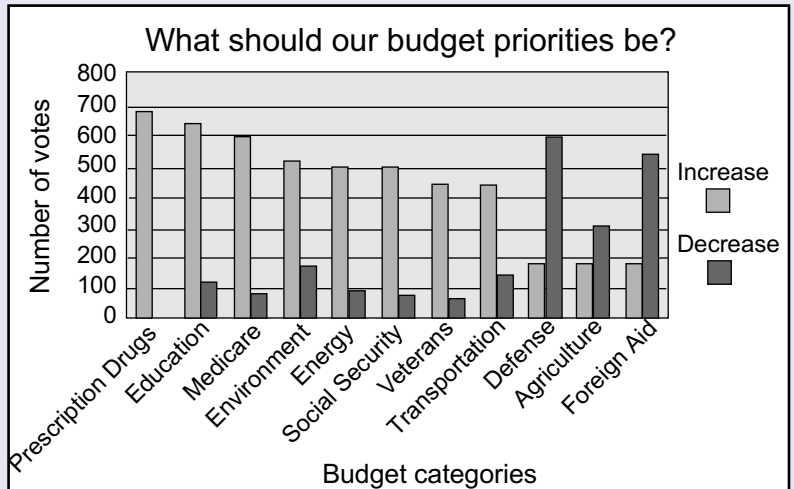
Citizens of the Thirteenth District Make Their Budget Priorities Known

Thank you to the thousands of you who took the time to fill out my 2003 Budget Poll. I appreciate your letting me know what you think our top budget priorities ought to be and what we should do to address the growing budget deficit.

Your responses made it clear that an overwhelming number of you believe providing a prescription drug benefit and strengthening Medicare should be our number one priority. A large majority also believe top priority should be given to increasing funding for our schools, protecting our environment, and shoring up Social Security.

On what to do about our large budget deficit, most of you supported stopping the President's huge tax cuts from going into effect. An almost equal number believed we ought to cut spending. Among the list of programs you evaluated, the largest number of you believed we ought to cut defense spending, followed by foreign aid, and farm subsidies.

Please see the graphs to the right for a tally of responses from our community.



Stark Legislation Provides a Real Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit

The battle to define a prescription drug benefit is in full swing. In June, I introduced the Medicare Rx Drug Benefit and Discount Act which provides Medicare beneficiaries with the drug benefit seniors told us they need. Under my bill, a beneficiary would pay a \$25 a month premium, an annual deductible of \$100, 20% co-payment, and would never spend more than \$2,000 a year on prescription drugs. The bill assures better prices on prescription drugs by requiring the Secretary of HHS to negotiate discounted drug prices for Medicare beneficiaries. Very importantly, our bill protects and improves the Medicare program as we know it.

The Medicare prescription drug bill introduced by House Republicans differs greatly. It has no standard benefit package and no

defined premium. Instead, it turns over the operation of a Medicare drug benefit to the private sector. It lets private plans decide what benefits they'll cover and what they'll charge seniors. In addition, it leaves seniors with

that drugs will be available at their local pharmacy.

What will happen on a Medicare prescription drug benefit this year remains to be seen. There are dramatic differences between

the bills that have been introduced in the House. When the Senate considers the issue, we expect that proposal to differ from both House bills.

I hear continuously from senior citizens in our community

that a Medicare prescription drug benefit is their most pressing concern. Congress has passed numerous tax bills in the past months that squander trillions of dollars on the richest few. We need to defeat those initiatives and redirect federal spending to providing a real drug benefit to all of America's seniors. I'll keep working to achieve that goal.

HOUSE MINORITY BILL (introduced by Democrats)		HOUSE MAJORITY BILL (introduced by Republicans)	
PREMIUM:	\$25		Not defined
DEDUCTIBLE:	\$100 a year		\$250 a year
COPAYMENTS:	20%		20% between \$ 250 - \$1000 50% between \$1001 - \$2000 100% between \$2001 and \$4900
OUT-OF POCKET SPENDING LIMIT:	\$2000		\$3800

a gaping hole in coverage. Under the Republican plan, seniors will be 100% liable for the cost of medications above \$2,000 a year until they've bought \$4,900 worth of drugs. The Republican bill simply fails to guarantee drug coverage. It doesn't guarantee seniors access to the drugs their doctors prescribe. It won't ensure

Stark Calls on Attorney General to Protect Civil Liberties

Protecting our nation from terrorists is a top priority, but we must do it without sacrificing our civil liberties. The Bush Administration has ignored this important principle and given Federal law enforcement agencies broad, new powers to pursue individuals "suspected" of posing a terrorist threat.

On May 30, Attorney General John Ashcroft lifted a nearly 30-year old ban on domestic spying. The ban was put in place in the 1970s to stop the FBI from abusing their law enforcement powers by engaging in illegal spying on civil rights leaders like Martin Luther King, Jr.

With the ban on spying lifted, FBI field agents have been given unprecedented authority to freely engage in surveillance activities wherever they choose. In fact, agents can treat anyone as a suspect without obtaining evidence of criminal intent or wrongdoing. This is fundamentally at odds with the very nature of our criminal justice system, which is based on the principle that you

are innocent until proven guilty.

The FBI is now permitted to secretly eavesdrop on public gatherings such as church meetings and political rallies. They can intercept e-mail traffic, tap into Internet chat-rooms, and stake out libraries to monitor the content of what Americans read or write to each other.

The broad latitude provided under these new FBI guidelines is a blatant violation of each American's right to privacy. I have joined with several of my colleagues in asking Attorney General Ashcroft to rescind these rules.

It is outrageous that at this time in our history we should be forced to argue that American citizens have a right to live free of unwarranted government intrusion into their lives. Our democracy is grounded in the idea that our government is accountable to the Constitution and cannot deny the rights inherent to all our citizens. I will continue to fight to see that these principles are practiced.

Benji Endorses Pete's Humane Voting Record

Rep. Stark meets with a representative of the American Humane Association and canine movie-star, Benji. The



American Humane Association advocates for an end to child and animal abuse. Both visited Rep. Stark in his Washington office to present him with their Ultimate Humane Legislator award for his efforts in Congress to protect the lives of children and animals.



from my mailbox

Dear Pete,

The President must rescind his executive order allowing the use of military tribunals.

Luis, Fremont

Dear Luis,

I agree and will support efforts to overturn this policy.

Dear Pete,

Please cosponsor the Medicaid Safety Net Hospital Preservation Act. It will help hospitals ensure that everyone has access to hospital care when they need it.

Dana, Oakland

Dear Dana,

I am a cosponsor of this important bill.

Dear Pete,

Thank you for your vote in favor of the Sanchez Amendment to the DOD Authorization bill to protect the reproductive rights of women in the military.

Robert, Fremont

Dear Robert,

You're welcome! I take pride in voting for legislation protecting women's right to choose.

Dear Pete,

I think it is necessary that we arm our pilots in the cockpit.

Mildred, San Leandro

Dear Mildred,

Sorry, but we disagree. Pilots are trained to fly, not shoot!

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Pete".

Stark Working to Protect Our Environment

In Congress, I have been working hard to protect our health and safety and honor our environmental legacy by preserving California's natural treasures.

In June, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced its intention to roll back important clean air rules that require polluting industries to reduce toxic emissions. The Administration wants to discontinue EPA's long-standing practice of requiring aging power plants to upgrade their antipollution measures when they increase their output of emissions.

Despite studies that show these sensible clean air standards have drastically improved air quality nationwide, the Administration has succumbed to pressure by the multi-billion dollar energy industry, which argues that these responsible environmental measures are too costly.

I vehemently oppose the Administration's decision. Clean air should be a national priority, not a bargaining chip in the debate over energy. Keeping these standards in

place is essential to the health and safety of our families.

I am also working to convince the President to reconsider his recent decision to allow oil drilling off California's coastline. On May 29, President Bush agreed to pay oil companies \$235 million to abandon drilling leases off the Florida coast and in the Everglades. However, the President did not extend these same protections to California.

I joined many of my colleagues in signing an urgent letter to the President asking that he treat California equally and end further oil development off our coast just as he did for Florida. I'm continuing my fight to see to it that we put an end to drilling off California's coast.

I am also working hard to foster the survival of wetlands, fisheries and waterfowl populations in the San Francisco Bay Estuary. I am cosponsoring legislation with other representatives from the Bay Area to authorize \$50 million for the San Francisco Bay Estuary Ecosystem Restoration Project. The goal of the project



is to restore hundreds of acres of devastated wetlands and creeks by 2020.

This legislation provides a needed boost to vital reclamation efforts currently being undertaken by the Army Corps of Engineers. It will also empower local communities to actively engage in this important stewardship and help preserve the Bay for future generations.



PETE'S TOWN MEETINGS

Saturday, August 3, 2002

Let me hear your views.

FREMONT

9:00 - 10:00 am
City Council Chambers
39700 Civic Center Dr.

HAYWARD

10:30 - 11:30 am
City Council Chambers
777 B Street

SAN LEANDRO

Noon - 1:00 pm
San Leandro Library
Dave Karp Room
300 Estudillo

Doors open 10 minutes before meetings start.

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TIME VALUE

This mailing was prepared, published, and mailed at taxpayer expense.