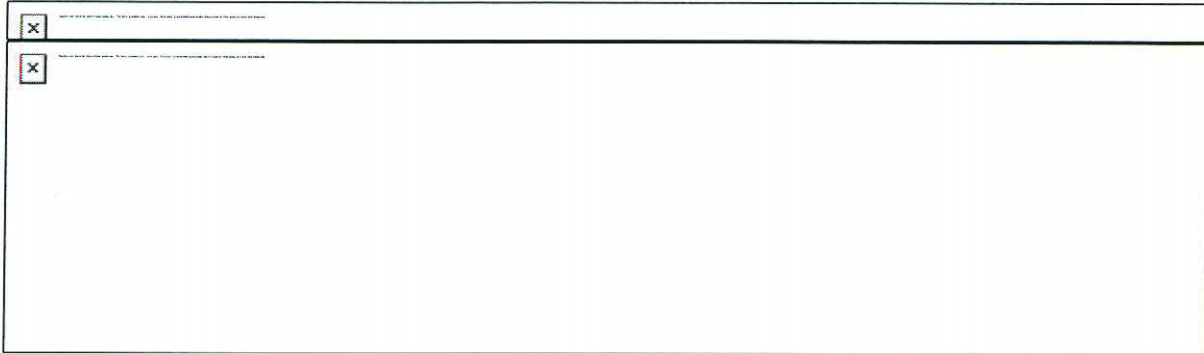


(c)

CC: Adm.

Lashway, Lisa

From: Rep. Rodney P. Frelinghuysen [Congressman.Frelinghuysen@mail.house.gov]
Sent: Friday, March 06, 2009 5:13 PM
To: Lashway, Lisa
Subject: Congressman Rodney Frelinghuysen's e-Newsletter



eNews - March 6, 2009



What's Inside?

1. The Week Just Past
2. A Bloated Omnibus bill will become law... eventually
3. Frelinghuysen Votes Against Mortgage "Cram down"
4. Pressing the Energy Department to Change
5. Defense Subcommittee studies soldier injuries
6. Meets with Veterans
7. Spread the eNews
8. Contact Rep. Frelinghuysen

The Week Just Past

 "The stock market did not have a good week with the Dow's plunge well below 7,000.

"I was disappointed that the President seemed to dismiss stock prices as a barometer of consumer confidence, saying he 'won't spend all his time tracking' trends. No one expects that. But what people do expect is a recognition that Wall Street's slide is a good indicator of the health of our country and others around the globe.

"Family budgets are tight, nest eggs have shrunk and job loss is at an all-time high. And, as Americans look to their national leaders in Washington for solutions to help bring our nation out of this financial mess, the proposals they are getting are poorly explained and defended, and only seem to add insult to injury:

- The misdirected, trillion-dollar "stimulus" spending plan that will not stimulate the economy any time soon;
- The massive \$410 billion "Omnibus" spending bill that will complete the appropriations process for the fiscal year that actually started on October 1;
- The Administration's proposed FY 2010 budget, loaded with a tax hike on every single American – including families, small businesses, and seniors – to pay for more unprecedented domestic spending and will swell public employee payrolls in Washington and Trenton.

- Another \$350 billion for the ineffective Troubled Assets Relief Program (TARP), where dollars went to big, federal government stakes in over 400 banks!

“At a time when American families are making difficult decisions about their own budgets, shouldn’t Congress and the Administration be making the same tough spending choices?”

“Also this week, Freddie Mac’s CEO resigned, another recognition of how Freddie Mac and its counterpart, Fannie Mae, have seen their missions restructured since they were ‘nationalized’ in September. The American people need to know that these agencies are now playing a major role in the housing recovery plans of the Obama administration by funneling cash into the home loan market targeted to bring down rates and restructure thousands of mortgages.

“I also found it very ironic that Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner told the Senate Finance Committee on Wednesday about the Administration’s efforts to crack-down on taxpayers who do not pay the taxes they legally owe!”

A Bloated “Omnibus” bill will become law...eventually

The U.S. Senate failed last night to give final approval to H.R. 1105, the Omnibus Appropriations Act for the fiscal year that started last October. This action would have cleared the bill for President Obama’s signature.

“Eventually the Senate will pass this bill and the President will sign it, bring to a close another sad chapter in this Congress’ short history,” said Frelinghuysen. “While New Jersey families are cutting back to get through difficult economic times, Speaker Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Reid apparently do not see the need to do the same. This massive government spending bill becomes law just weeks after an \$800 billion economic ‘stimulus’ package and a \$350 billion taxpayer commitment to the Troubled Assets Relief Program for banks. With each new borrowed dollar, and we are talking about billions, not millions, of dollars, our nation goes further into debt on the backs of future generations.”

Frelinghuysen Votes Against Mortgage “Cram down”

In the midst of an historic housing crisis, responsible homeowners who live within their means, make honest representations on their loan applications and pay their debts deserve Congress’ support. At most, any changes to bankruptcy laws should be for families who “play by the rules” but who, through no fault of their own, are unable to refinance, such as people living in areas where home values have declined sharply, wiping out the homeowners’ original equity.

Over Rep. Frelinghuysen’s objections, the House yesterday approved legislation that would allow bankruptcy courts to reduce (or “cram down”) mortgage principal, adjust interest rates, extend maturity dates, and limit the recovery of mortgage-related creditor fees. This will reverse the Bankruptcy Code’s 100-plus-year exception of principal residence mortgages from bankruptcy. In effect, this bill, H.R. 1106, rewards irresponsible borrowers and lenders at the expense of the almost 90 percent of American families still making their mortgage payments on time. This is fundamentally unfair – and the American people know it.

Rep. Frelinghuysen opposed H.R. 1106. “This bill will add even more risk to mortgage markets, making it more difficult and costly for people to buy and sell homes,” he said. “This legislation also encourages homeowners in trouble to file for bankruptcy, when it should be the last resort, not the first option!”

During the course of the debate on H.R. 1106, Frelinghuysen supported a measure that sought to ensure that unscrupulous and irresponsible lenders and borrowers will not be bailed out by the overwhelming majority of working families that have lived responsibly within their means and would remove mortgage default incentives. This is key to protecting taxpayers from greater exposure, and ensuring fairness to responsible homeowners.

Pressing the Department of Energy to Change

In his role as Ranking Republican on the Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water,

Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen participated in a major oversight hearing this week. The hearing underscored fundamental and systemic problems across the Department of Energy (DOE) that, if left unchecked, will constitute an enormous, if not historic, waste of taxpayer dollars, as the DOE now has access to \$30 billion for new grants and loans under the recently-passed "stimulus" package. Frelinghuysen said, "These are serious, serious problems. And to have them endure for as long as they have within this Agency...whose mission is so vital to our environmental and economic prosperity, as well as our national security...is completely unacceptable."

Noting the recent appointment of Secretary of Energy Steven Chu, Frelinghuysen said, "Perhaps this overhaul is exactly what the Department needs. I certainly hope so. However, to the entire Department, I would caution that the grace period will be extremely short. I, along with my colleagues, will expect an immediate improvement. Your mission is simply too great and the consequences too dire."

Defense Subcommittee studies soldier injuries

The Defense Appropriations Subcommittee held a hearing this week on injuries and treatments for servicemembers wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"We are committed to ensuring that every wounded warrior, especially those with psychological health or traumatic brain injuries (TBI), receives consistently excellent care," said Frelinghuysen. "When it comes to psychological health and TBI, the Department of Defense, the Veterans Administration (VA) and the medical community are making solid progress in the areas of prevention, protection, diagnosis, treatment and recovery. But far more remains to be done and it's the responsibility of this Subcommittee to provide the funding to allow this important work to continue."

The Army alone spent \$242 million last year for staff, facilities and programs to serve troops with brain injuries.

The Subcommittee took testimony from Ellen Embrey, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Force Health Readiness and Protection and Brigadier General Loree Sutton, M.D., Director of the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury.

Frelinghuysen urged Secretary Embrey and General Sutton to continue to work to smooth the transition of soldiers, Marines, sailors and Air Force personnel from the Department of Defense medical system to the VA health care programs. "There is no reason why this hand-over cannot be seamless," he said.

Meets with Veterans

Rep. Frelinghuysen hosted meetings with two separate veterans organizations in his Washington office this week: the American Legion and the Jewish War Veterans. He pledged to continue to work to improve the VA health care system nationwide and at the East Orange and Lyons Medical Centers and the processing of veterans benefits claims.

Spread the eNews


Enjoy receiving this weekly e-newsletter? Tell your friends and neighbors to sign up at Rep. Frelinghuysen's website at <http://frelinghuysen.house.gov/>

Contact Rep. Frelinghuysen

This email is sent from an unattended mailbox. To respond or email Rep. Frelinghuysen, please visit <http://frelinghuysen.house.gov/contactus/form.cfm>

This message was sent from Rep. Rodney P. Frelinghuysen to clerk@mtolivetwp.org. It was sent from: Office of Congressman Rodney Frelinghuysen, 2442 Rayburn Building, Washington, DC 20515. You can modify/update your subscription via the link below.



 [Manage your subscription](#)

