

Oberstar Democracy Project



Friends of Jim Oberstar
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Newsletter Date

Volume 2, Issue 2

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Jim's Schedule:

Saturday, April 14th

- Veterans Event—Cambridge Community College 10am-Noon
- Local 49 Training Center Grand Opening, 40276 Fishtail Rd, Hinckley, MN 12pm

Saturday, April 21st

- Humphrey Day Dinner

The Hardest Working Committee in Congress!

Jim Oberstar's Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure has been hard at work this month. Under Oberstar's leadership the Transportation has moved 17 Bills through the House in just three months. That is more legislation that the same committee moved under Republican leadership in all of 2006. Under Democratic leadership, it is more than a third of the total legislation passed by the House so far this year. "People want to see results," Oberstar said, "and we are working hard to create opportunity through good public policy."

The House passed two pieces of legislation this month that will help Minnesota communities update their water and sewer systems. Oberstar said the Water Quality Financing Act (HR 720), shows that

Democrats and Republicans can work together to get things done. The State Revolving Loan Fund will provide \$14 billion in guaranteed loans to cities and towns for sewer projects at a low interest rate. These Federal loans save taxpayers billions of dollars every year.

The programs previous authorization ended in 1994, since then Republican leaders have fought hard to keep it off the House floor. Republicans also attempted to exempt the bill from the Davis-Bacon law that requires contractors on federally funded projects to pay workers the prevailing wage for their area. Republicans claimed that paying a prevailing wage would make the cost of repairing the storm ravaged Gulf Coast too costly. The prevailing wage in that area is already very low Ober-

star said, "I don't know how you save money by going any lower than \$7.86 an hour."

The House also passed the Water Quality Investment Act (HR 569), a bill that provides \$1.5 billion for cities to upgrade or repair damaged or outdated sewer systems. This legislation has a huge effect on cities such as Duluth, where runoff water surpasses capacity at the cities treatment plant, forcing raw sewage into Lake Superior.

Oberstar says the federal government should continue to invest in local communities on projects like this. "We've had a partnership with state and local governments; they've invested billions of dollars at the local level," Oberstar said. "We need to continue that partnership into the future; this legislation will do that."

Petersen Provides Experience, Leadership

"Last year was a great win for the Oberstar team," says Petersen, "We look forward to carrying that momentum into a successful year for all Democrats in 2008."

Petersen, the Oberstar campaign Political Director, has an impressive resume. She started her career as a Congressional Aide for David Minge, and worked as his Chief-of-Staff in Washington DC. She also Ran

Mike Ciresi's Senate bid in 2000, and was the Executive Director for Target Market, Minnesota's anti-smoking campaign. After consulting for Grass Roots Solutions, Alana joined the Oberstar congressional staff in 2005 and subsequently the 2006 campaign team.

Petersen will work with the Oberstar team to develop strategy for 2008 and to carry out a fundraising plan. Her

extensive experience with federal and local campaigns is a true asset to the Oberstar team.

"I have always been excited about politics," Petersen said, "especially the opportunity to help young people get engaged." Alana resides in Pine City with her husband Thom, who is Director of Government Relations for the Minnesota Farmers Union, and their two sons Dylan and Waylon.

Oberstar Works to Protect Transit from Terrorist Attack

The Committee of Transportation and Infrastructure held hearings this month on the safety of our nation's trucks, rail, and buses. Chairman Jim Oberstar said that our security needs must be reevaluated in the post 9/11 era.

Congress has focused much of its attention on airline security following the 9/11 attacks. But Oberstar said we need to evaluate the other areas in which we are vulnerable to attack. "We're like generals fighting the last war," said

Oberstar. "We need to look over the horizon at the next generation threat."

Oberstar says it is time to look to the future to determine what new types of attacks could occur. Concerns tend to center around hazardous material crossing our borders, and coming into our ports. Oberstar says the reality is that raw materials for a possible terrorist attacks are being shipped inside our country on our roads and rails every day. "Terrorists don't have to ship

in a container with radioactive materials or a weapon of mass destruction. There are already such devices, sodium hydroxide tanks for example, that terrorists could detonate in an urban area. We need to have measures in place to protect against those dangers," Oberstar said.

Oberstar says the committee will hold more hearing as the session progresses, and plans to have legislation on the table later this year.

Urgent Care for Cass County

Congressman Jim Oberstar introduced a bill this month that provides urgent care to north central Cass County, for nearly 32 years Cass County residents have had to drive an hour or more to reach emergency medical assistance.

When the hospital in Walker closed its doors in 1975 it forced people to drive to Bemidji, Brainerd, Park Rapids, and Deer River to receive emergency care. "When people need urgent care every minute counts," said Oberstar. "A mother with a baby


who is running a high fever should not have to drive for more than an hour to get help. In the case of a serious accident involving trauma those minutes can mean the difference between life and death."

The legislation introduced by Oberstar would designate the Ag-Gwaha-Ching medical facility to be used as a critical access hospital. Last year state, county and other local officials worked with the Cass County Health Task Force to pass legislation to designate Ah-Gwah-Ching long-term

care facility into a 25 bed integrated medical campus.

Current Federal government regulation provides that a 'critical access hospital' must be a minimum of 35 miles from the nearest hospital; the Ah-Gwah-Ching facility is 32 miles from the Park Rapids hospital.

Oberstar is optimistic his bill will pass Congress later this year, "This is truly a bipartisan issue, it is about making sure that people can get to the hospital in an emergency," said Oberstar.



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Contact the Campaign!

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Jim Oberstar

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Volunteering

Traveling around MN to support Democrats

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Using my name and testimonial

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