



Your Congressman Reports

Danny K. Davis

Representative in Congress

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Government Works for the People

A Key Component of 7th Congressional District Representation

by Congressman Danny K. Davis



Congressman Davis with summer 2008 DC interns Brian Johnson (Chicago) Howard University, Emily Ninneman (Chicago) Loyola University, Martquise Alston (Chicago) Spelman College, not pictured Bernard Moore, Ph.D. fellow, Howard University.

I am firmly and absolutely convinced that an informed, educated citizenry with access to their representatives and with the ability to hold public officials accountable is the greatest safeguard of democracy known to exist.

It is for this reason that I hold regularly scheduled townhall meetings. My office hosts a substantial number of advisory committees which meet regularly to discuss issues and attempt to solve problems. The meetings are open to the public and all are invited and encouraged to participate in any of these activities. To join one of my advisory committees please call 773-533-7520. I have a very active internship program and interns can usually be found in both our Washington, DC and District Offices year round.

There is one special type of event Members of Congress hold each year: the Annual Congressional Art Competition. This event is designed to highlight the importance of art in our society and to give our high school students an opportunity to showcase their creative abilities. This year's event was another great success. Congratulations to this year's first place winner Rachel Foran (Oak Park/River Forest High School) and all the talented young artists who participated. This year's participating schools were: St. Joseph H.S., Westchester, Proviso East H.S., Maywood, the Latin School, Chicago, Crane H.S., Chicago, Proviso West H.S. Hillside, Manley Career Academy, Chicago, Oak Park/River Forest H.S., Oak Park, Providence St. Mel H.S. Chicago, Whitney

M. Young H.S., Chicago, George W. Collins H.S., Chicago and North Lawndale College Prep. H.S. Chicago. Following is a list of my upcoming 7th Congressional District events in which you might wish to participate.

<u>Date and Time</u>	<u>Townhall Meeting</u>	<u>Location</u>
August 16 - noon	Annual Back-to-School "Education is the Key"	Columbus Park, Chicago
September 5 - 6:00 p.m.	Annual "State-of-the-District" opening session	Malcolm X College, Chicago
September 6 - 8:30 a.m.	Annual "State-of-the-District" all day session	Malcolm X College, Chicago
September 12 - 9:00 a.m.	Business Breakfast with special guest State Rep. Karen Yarbrough	Rock of Ages, 1405 Madison, Maywood
September 13 - 9:00 a.m.	Annual Recovery Day	3333 West Arthington, Chicago
September 20 - 9:00 a.m.	Annual AIDS Day	Columbus & Balbo, Chicago
October 8 & 9 - 9:00 a.m.	Opportunity Fair with special guest State Rep. Karen Yarbrough	Rock of Ages, 1405 Madison, Maywood

Gas Prices Remain a Big Issue – What Is Congress Doing

Led by Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Congress is moving in a new direction to reduce our dependence on foreign oil and bring down gas prices. The Congress is working to create a cleaner, smarter energy future for America that lowers costs, protects the environment and creates hundreds of thousands of green jobs. Examples:

- Several weeks ago Congress passed bipartisan legislation to temporarily suspend oil purchases for the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.
- Congress passed a farm bill over the President's veto which boosts homegrown biofuel production, increasingly from non-food crops.

- The House passed legislation to invest in renewable energy to make America less dependent on foreign oil, strengthen our national security and lower energy prices in the long run. The legislation to extend and expand tax incentives for renewable electricity and fuels as well as for plug-in hybrid cars, energy efficient homes, buildings and appliances, will save thousands of jobs and create hundreds of thousands of new jobs.
- The Congress has initiated a series of hearings to address rising gas prices, focusing on the growing burdens on American families and small businesses. The hearing have examined how speculation in financial energy markets is contributing to the high price of oil and explored anti-competitive practices in the oil and gasoline industry.
- "The Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007" included landmark provisions to make cars and trucks more efficient – to 35 miles per gallon by 2020 and promote the use of more affordable American biofuels. The new fuel economy standards for cars and trucks will reduce our oil consumption by one million barrels per day in 2020 and will save American families \$700 to \$1000 per year at the pump.

President Signs Davis Bill to Cut down on Crime, Reduce Recidivism and Help People with Criminal Records Get Their Lives Back on Track



Mayor Richard Daley congratulating Congressman Davis on the passage of the Second Chance Act. The Second Chance Act had been a priority for the City legislative agenda for several years.

Following discussion at the 2002 State of the District Townhall, meeting Congressman Davis decided that the 7th Congressional District needed to focus more on helping individuals with criminal records to successfully reintegrate back into the community after serving a sentence for commission of a crime. The ex-offenders advisory committee went to work and ultimately produced a number of recommendations which were put together and introduced as a bill by Congressman Davis: the "Public Safety Ex-Offenders Self Sufficiency Act of 2003."

In addition to what was ultimately signed by President Bush the "Public Safety Ex-Offenders Self Sufficiency Act of 2003" called for building 100,000 units of SRO type housing across the country for ex-offenders. As the war in Iraq escalated and became more costly, and as the economy got worse and

worse, Congressman Davis decided to eliminate the housing portion of the bill and came back with what became known as the "Second Chance Act of 2007."

After working with House and Senate members, corrections professionals, criminal justice reformers, ex-offender groups, judges and other interested parties the U.S. House of Representatives voted 347 to 62 on November 13, 2007 to pass the Second Chance Act. After much consideration and several setbacks, the Senate voted unanimously on March 11, 2008 to pass the bill. On April 9, 2008, in a White House ceremony, President Bush signed the "Second Chance Act" into law and charged his administration with the responsibility of assuring the Act is implemented to "... help the formerly incarcerated build new lives as productive members of our society."

Davis Supports One-for-One Replacement of Housing Units Redeveloped Under HOPE VI and Retention of Davis-Bacon for Federally Funded Work Projects

Following is an excerpt on Congressman Davis' speech during debate on the Public Housing Bill.

"Madam. Speaker, I rise in strong support of HR 3524, re-authorization of the HOPE VI program. First of all, I commend Sub-Committee Chairman Maxine Waters for her outstanding work on this legislation. I also commend Chairman Barney Frank for his outstanding leadership of the Financial Services Committee, especially as we wrestle with the key issues of mortgage foreclosure and stimulation of the economy. Madam Speaker, as I listen to this debate, it seems to me that some of my colleagues are trying to take the hope out of HOPE VI. If ever there was a need for HOPE VI, that need is now."

"Strong features of the bill are one-for-one replacement. As we have witnessed the demolition of concentrated high rises across the country will actually result in lost housing units. One-for-one replacement gives hope to those people who are afraid of becoming homeless and having no place to go. Of great concern to me are the efforts to strike out Davis Bacon prevailing wage provisions, which would take hope away from tradesmen and construction workers that they can earn a liveable wage."

"Madam Speaker, I strongly support the amendment being put forth by Representative Lee which assures hope for many families who are hard pressed to find a decent place to live because some member of their family may have

gotten into trouble with the law. Madam Speaker, this is a good bill, let's pass it and create hope for the homeless and the hopeless. I yield back my time."

Davis Votes No on War Funding and FISA

On Thursday, June 19, 2008, the U.S. House of Representatives approved \$162 billion to continue the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan well into 2009. The vote on this was 268 - 155. **Congressman Davis voted NO.**

Davis voted **YES** on domestic funding including a new GI bill (\$62.8 billion over ten years for veterans education benefits, \$8.2 billion to extend unemployment insurance by thirteen weeks, \$2.65 billion dollars for flood relief in the Midwest, \$5.8 billion to strengthen levees in New Orleans and an assortment of smaller appropriations for disaster assistance overseas, building veterans hospitals, cost overruns at the Census Bureau and improving safety oversight and inspections of food and medical products.

Congressman Davis voted NO on the FISA Amendments Act which passed the House by a vote of 293 to 129. This bill failed to address the proper balance between national security and our hard won civil liberties. The bill as presented severely undermined the ability of the Federal courts to review the legality of domestic surveillance programs. It provided retroactive immunity to telecommunication companies which participated in illegal spying before Congress or the courts were even able to determine what laws may have been broken. As a nation we have a solemn responsibility to preserve the freedoms so many before us have sacrificed for.

Education

Research shows that the first five years of life are critical to creating a foundation for a healthy child. My "Education Begins at Home Act", creates the first dedicated funding stream for voluntary early home visiting programs that educate parents and provide family support services within one's home. Early home visitation programs are a proven way to improve school readiness, well-being, and health for children and families.

An important part of my work on the Education Committee this year was my work to pass the new Head Start Act. Some of the features that I focused on were 1) the effort to maintain the role of equal responsibility for parents in governing Head Start, a hallmark of this pivotal program; 2) ensuring that low-income families in high-cost-of-living areas such as Chicago do not lose access to this program; 3) creating a program to recruit minority male teachers; 4) increasing the emphasis on children's social-emotional well-being and mental health; and 5) recognizing the expanding role of kinship caregivers in children's lives.



Congressman Davis and Senator Barack Obama exchanging a few words on the Kinship Care bill. Also pictured Reps. Louise Slaughter, Elliot Engel, Carolyn Kilpatrick and Joe Bacca.

As this issue of *Your Congressman Reports* goes to press we are completing our conference negotiations for the Higher Education Act. There are multiple provisions of this bill that will benefit Chicago and Illinois. These include: 1) support for Predominantly Black Institutions, such as Malcolm X, Chicago State, Kennedy King, Olive Harvey and possibly Robert Morris and Harold Washington; 2) support for minority men in higher education; 3) clarification of Federal rules and guidelines which allow the Chicago Public Schools to provide programs to prepare low-income students for college; 4) establishes a Federal program modeled on Chicago's teacher residency program; and 5) maintains the ability of our local institutions to provide federal loans to their students and use any profits for student scholarships. I fought to strengthen educational programs for people in prison as well, to help them succeed when transitioning back into their communities.

Child Welfare

The House passage of the "Fostering Connections to Success Act" was a happy day for children in the U.S. This bill is a strong first step in reforming the foster care system, and it includes provisions supporting kinship caregivers that I have championed for years. Specifically, the bill includes the three core elements of my bill, the "Kinship Caregiver Support Act": (1) it allows states to use federal funds to support family caregivers raising relatives in the foster care system; (2) it provides funding to establish kinship navigator programs; and (3) it requires notification of relatives when a child enters the foster care system. According to Census data, there are just under 120,000 children in Illinois being raised by grandparents and other relatives.

I also introduced a bill that extends important educational protections to children and youth in foster care. Currently, there are federal protections for homeless youth to ensure that they have stability in their educational environments. These protections do not fully cover foster children. My bill would ensure that states apply educational laws related to children without permanent homes equally, which would include guaranteeing a student's access to needed academic supports, school enrichment opportunities, and participation in extracurricular activities.

Davis Moves Landmark Legislation on Federal Workforce

Through my Chairmanship on the House Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, Postal Service and the District of Columbia, I have successfully introduced and spearheaded the passage of landmark legislation during the 110th Congress. Highlights of some of these legislative measures are provided below:

“Government Accountability Office Act of 2008” The Government Accountability Office (GAO) is an independent, nonpartisan agency that works for Congress. Often called the "congressional watchdog," GAO investigates how the federal government spends tax dollars. The intent of this legislation is to restore the 2006 and 2007 annual “across the board increase” to employees who met expectations but did not receive the adjustment.

“Telework Improvements Act” Under this bill, every executive agency will be required to have policies in place that allow eligible employees to telework, that is, to work from home or outside their traditional office or workplace, using their personal computer. Telework provides a number of benefits including reduced energy consumption and traffic congestion, competitive hiring and retention, cost savings, and emergency preparedness.

“Senior Executive Service Diversity Assurance Act” The Senior Executive Service (SES) represents the most senior level career civil servants in the federal government. There are approximately 6,000 career appointed senior executives in the federal government and another 1,000 non-career appointed executives. This bill promotes greater diversity within federal agencies and improves the policy direction and oversight of the SES. The bill requires agencies to ensure diversity by increasing minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities. This legislation will ultimately change the make up of SES, thereby changing the face of the federal government to more accurately reflect diversity in our country.

“The Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act of 2008” One of the biggest challenges facing federal employees and many other working Americans, is the ability to successfully balance work and family. The federal government is striving to set the example for local and state governments as well as the private sector that no one should ever be penalized for embarking on a new beginning in their lives. To help create a family friendly environment for combining a successful career and a healthy family life, I am proud to have been an original co-sponsor of the “The Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act of 2008.”



Congressman Davis meets with local officials, State Rep. Karen Yarbrough, Proviso Township Mental Health Commission Executive Director Lisa De Nunzio-DeVivo and Cheryl Ramirez, Association of Community Mental Health Authorities of Illinois to discuss parity for mental health care in our insurance system.

Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney introduced this bill to provide that eight of the 12 weeks of parental leave shall be paid parental leave and eligible for other purposes. The bill will require the federal government to provide four weeks of paid parental leave to its employees for the birth, adoption or placement of a child for foster care. Once a federal employee uses his/her four weeks of paid parental leave, the bill will allow employees to use accrued sick leave for additional time off.

The “Government Accountability Office Act of 2008”, “Telework Improvements Act”, “Senior Executive Service Diversity Assurance Act” and “The Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act of 2008” have all successfully made it through the House and are progressing nicely in the U.S. Senate.

I am also continuing to press forward on legislation to create parity for mental health care in our insurance system.

U.S. House of Representatives

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