



Congressman

# Gene Green

## Reports

29th Congressional District of Texas

Spring 2010

Dear Friend,

This newsletter is focused on senior citizen and veteran issues, but includes information on job creation legislation as well as the new health care reform law and its impact on all of us. The newsletter also shows our successful electronic waste event in January and district projects that have received Recovery and Reinvestment funds to help our community and increase jobs. In addition, a voter registration form is provided to encourage anyone in your home who is eligible to vote to register for future elections.

Memorial Day is Monday, May 31. This is the day we honor all veterans, particularly those who made the ultimate sacrifice. We will be holding our Veterans Forum on Saturday, May 8 to provide information to our veterans and to listen to their concerns. I encourage those of you who have served in our military to attend.

This newsletter also announces our Senior Citizens Issues Forum scheduled for May 10th, along with our upcoming Job Fair and our annual Citizenship Day. You are welcome to attend any of these events of interest to you, but you need not wait to contact me. If you have issues of immediate concern, please call any of our offices and I will return your call. It is an honor to serve our district and thank you for your confidence.

Sincerely,

Gene Green

Member of Congress

### Health Reform in Our District

The House of Representatives passed legislation that will open access to health insurance to 95% of Americans. It has taken more than six decades of debate, countless hours of research and testimony before House and Senate committees and subcommittees, and more than a year of compromise to get to this point. I'd like to share with you what the bill actually means for our district and the benefits you can expect to see.

About 32% of our district receives health care coverage from an employer or through policies purchased on the individual market and 43% of our working citizens do not receive health care through their employer. Under the reform law, individuals with insurance can keep the coverage they have and that coverage will improve with a prohibition against annual and lifetime limits, and elimination of dropping insurance for individuals who become ill while insured, and

*Story continues on page 4.*

### Legislation to Create American Jobs

In December, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 2847 Jobs for Main Street Act. The bill was intended to create or save American jobs with investments in highways and transit, hiring teachers, police, and firefighters, small business, job training and affordable housing. The investments are already paid for by redirecting funds from the Troubled Asset Relief Fund (TARP) to main streets across the United States.

Some of the key investments include redirecting \$48.3 billion to rebuild crumbling roads and bridges, make additional highway infrastructure improvements, public transportation investments, and airport improvement grants. This also includes \$2 billion to help communities provide clean and safe water for their citizens and the environment.

The bill also redirects \$26.7 billion to stabilize public service jobs including \$23 billion for education jobs, \$1.18 billion for law

*Story continues on page 3*



Representatives from the Port of Houston present Representative Green with an award recognizing his hard work over the years for the benefit of the Port. He recently expressed support for H.R. 4844 to ensure the federal dollars in the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund are directed back for harbor maintenance

### Veterans Forum

Saturday, May 8

9:00-10:30am  
American Legion Post 586 Hall  
708 East Parker Road

### Job Fair

Monday, May 17

10:00am-4:00pm  
Jacinto City Town Center  
1025 Oates Road

### Senior Issues Forum

Monday, May 10

9:30-10:30am  
Jacinto City Town Center  
1025 Oates Road

### Citizenship Day

Saturday, June 12

8:00am-2:00pm  
Houston Community College  
Northline Campus  
8001 Fulton Street

### Contact Us

#### District Offices

256 N. Sam Houston Pkwy E.,  
Suite 29  
Houston, TX 77060  
(281) 999-5879 tel  
(281) 999-5716 fax

11811 I-10 East, Suite 430  
Houston, TX 77029  
(713) 330-0761 tel  
(713) 330-0807 fax

909 Decker Drive, Suite 124  
Baytown, TX 77520  
(281) 420-0502 tel  
(281) 420-0585 fax

#### DC office

2372 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515  
(202) 225-1688 tel  
(202) 225-9903 fax

## New Veterans Legislation

There have been recent concerns that the health care law will hurt military or veterans' health care. Nothing in the legislation will change the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs operation of health care programs or interfere with TRICARE. In fact, TRICARE, TRICARE for Life, and Veterans' Health Care all meet requirements of the reform that call for every American to be insured with at least a minimum quality of coverage.

H.R. 4887 the TRICARE Affirmation Act was passed by a unanimous vote through the House of Representatives to reaffirm that the Department of Defense program constitutes as essential health care coverage and will not be affected by the passage of health reform measures. As well, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki released a statement affirming this.

On June 20, 2009, a new provision to the GI Bill was passed into law that will expand benefits to fallen service members. The Marine Gunnery Sgt. John David Fry Scholarship would cover the full cost of a college education for all children of military members serving after September 11, 2001 who are killed in combat of active duty. It will cover tuition and fees up to the maximum in-state tuition at a public university, a monthly housing allowance, and up to \$1,000 for books and supplies a year.

The President's budget has proposed a VA budget of \$125 billion, an \$11 billion increase from the 2010 budget. The Administration is requesting \$51.5 billion for VA medical care. This includes a 27% funding increase of \$460 million and over 4,000 additional claims processors. The total figure also includes \$5.2 billion (up \$410 million) to expand mental health programs, \$799 million (up \$265 million) to implement the VA's comprehensive plan to reduce homelessness, \$6.8 billion (up \$859 million) to expand institutional and non-institutional long term care services, and \$2.6 billion (up \$597 million) for Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom veterans. Also included are funds supporting three medical facility projects in construction and begins two new projects.

Recently, a series of measures were passed in the House to assist homeless veterans and increase on-the-job training. H.R. 4810 the End Veteran Homelessness Act of 2010 strengthens successful comprehensive programs for homeless veterans, requires housing counselors to generate more veteran housing opportunities at each VA medical center that has housing services, strengthens permanent housing programs, and pays special attention to the needs of homeless women veterans and homeless veterans with children.

H.R. 1879 the National Guard Employment Protection Act of 2010 extends key reemployment rights to all of those called up for full-time National Guard duty, including those assigned to a homeland security mission.

H.R. 4667 the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2010 increases the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans.

The VA recently proposed new regulation that will add three new illnesses to the list of health problems found to be related to Agent Orange and other herbicide exposures, opening an easier path for veterans who might have been exposed while serving in Vietnam. The illnesses are B cell leukemias, Parkinson's disease, and ischemic heart disease. Even though this is proposed, the VA encourages Vietnam veterans with these diseases to submit applications for compensation now so they can receive benefits from the date of application once the rule becomes final.

If you are a veteran, please contact our office with any problems you encounter. We are always happy to help or provide you with any needed information.

## Veterans Forum

**Saturday, May 8**

9:00 – 10:30am

American Legion Post 586 Hall  
708 East Parker Road

Please join Congressman Green as he hosts a discussion on veterans' legislation and program updates. Various service organizations will also be present to provide information about veterans support services.

## Health Reform Benefits Seniors

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and the Reconciliation Act of 2010 contain several provisions that will directly benefit seniors. A large component of the health reform was focused on strengthening Medicare and extending the solvency of the Medicare Trust Fund from 2017 to 2026. This is to ensure Medicare is in existence not only for seniors currently receiving Medicare benefits, but for future generations.

Currently, 45 million beneficiaries participate in Medicare. Congress implemented several improvements on how Medicare reimburses providers to streamline the program and reduce overpayments so both Medicare and Medicare Advantage will be able to sustain the increased number of future enrollees. The reform legislation changes the incentive system to reward health care providers with improved and sustained good health, rather than in the volume of visits and procedures. The law increases reimbursement for primary care services, and encourages collaboration and accountability among care providers through payment bundling.

Our office has received many calls, letters, and emails from concerned seniors who have been caught in the so-called "donut hole." The "donut hole" is the term used to describe the gap in prescription drug coverage that many seniors encounter in the Medicare Part D program. This occurs when beneficiaries reach \$2830 in total annual drug costs and must pay 100% out-of-pocket for prescriptions until they reach a total of \$4550 in out-of-pocket expenses. Once beneficiaries reach \$4550 in out-of-pocket expenses, Medicare resumes payment for most prescription drug cost. The reform legislation makes an immediate down payment in closing the donut hole, by giving current Medicare Part D enrollees in the donut hole a \$250 rebate this year. This rebate will be issued in the form of a check from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) in the quarter immediately following a beneficiary's entry into the "donut hole." Beginning in 2011, those in the "donut hole" will receive a 50% discount on brand-name drugs and phases in additional discounts for brand-name and generic drugs to close the hole completely by 2020. A typical beneficiary who enters the "donut hole" will see savings of over \$700 in 2011 and over \$3,000 by 2020.

## Seniors Issues Forum

**Monday, May 10**

9:30 – 10:30am

Jacinto City Town Center  
1025 Oates Road

Seniors join Congressman Green and representatives from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Social Security Administration and Harris County Area Agency on Aging for an in-dept discussion on current issues affecting you, including health reform and the benefits you can expect.

There have been many claims that the new law will eliminate Medicare Advantage plans – this is not true. Congress supports the Medicare Advantage program, but we have a duty to ensure Medicare continues to exist for future generations so reforms to the Medicare Advantage program were necessary. In 2003, private insurance companies first petitioned to join Medicare under the claim they could provide more care at less cost. They claimed they could provide the same services as traditional Medicare, but at 95% of the cost. Medicare Advantage providers have not lived up to their end of the bargain and have consistently required reimbursement rates that are substantially higher than traditional Medicare. This year alone, Medicare Advantage plans are paid on average 14% more than traditional Medicare plans.

Other provisions included in the strengthening of Medicare are eliminated out-of-pocket expenses for preventative services, enhanced nursing home transparency related to resident protection and quality of care, and improved low-income programs in Medicare.

These reforms will directly benefit the 56,000 Medicare beneficiaries in our district. If you ever have any questions or if we can help you in any way, please don't hesitate to call any of our offices.

## Helpful Websites

[www.house.gov/green/](http://www.house.gov/green/)

[www.recovery.gov](http://www.recovery.gov)

[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

[www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov)

[www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)

[www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)

## Texas Voter Registration Application

For Official Use Only

Prescribed by the Office of the Secretary of State VR17web.07E.1es3

### Complete These Questions Before Proceeding

Check one  New  Change  Replacement

Are you a United States Citizen? .....  Yes  No

Will you be 18 years of age on or before election day? .....  Yes  No

**If you checked 'no' in response to either of the above, do not complete this form.**

Are you interested in serving as an election worker? .....  Yes  No

Continue below to complete application.

Last Name First Name Middle Name (If any) Former Name

**Residence Address:** Street Address and Apartment Number, City, State, and ZIP Code. If none, describe where you live. (Do not include P.O. Box or Rural Rt.)

**Mailing Address:** Street Address and Apartment Number or P.O. Box, City, State and ZIP Code: If mail cannot be delivered to your residence address.

Date of Birth: month, day, year Gender (Optional)  Male  Female

TX Driver's License No. or Personal I.D. No. (Issued by the Department of Public Safety)

Check if you do not have a TX Driver's License, or Personal Identification Number

If no TX Driver's License or Personal Identification, give last 4 digits of your Social Security Number

Check if you do not have a Social Security Number

Telephone Number, Include Area Code (Optional)

**I understand that giving false information to procure a voter registration is perjury, and a crime under state and federal law. Conviction of this crime may result in imprisonment up to 180 days, a fine up to \$2,000, or both.**

**I affirm that I**

- am a resident of this county;
- have not been finally convicted of a felony or if a felon I have completed all of my punishment including any term of incarceration, parole, supervision, period of probation, or I have been pardoned; and
- have not been determined by a final judgment of a court exercising probate jurisdiction to be totally mentally incapacitated or partially mentally incapacitated without the right to vote.

Signature of Applicant or Agent and Relationship to Applicant or Printed Name of Applicant if Signed by Witness and Date. / / Date



## Recovery Act Projects

In January of 2009, Congress passed the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) in response to the economic recession. The legislation was intended to help Americans become more globally competitive and energy independent, modernize our infrastructure and healthcare systems, and invest in the American workforce. Our area has received numerous grants and the state of Texas has received \$12 billion made possible by the Recovery Act. In the last quarter of 2008, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) shrunk 6.4% and in the last quarter of 2009, the GDP grew by 5.7%, the biggest 9 month swing in nearly 30 years. Here are where some of the dollars are being spent in our area:

\$200 million	CenterPoint Energy (Phase 1 of Smart Grid)
\$98.8 million	Port of Houston (dredging and other projects)
\$50 million	TxDOT (for 2 direct connectors at U.S. 59 and Beltway 8)
\$13 million	TxDOT (SH at Spur 330 flyover in Baytown)
\$5 million	Greater East End Livable Centers
\$4.7 million	San Jacinto Community College
\$3 million	SER-Jobs for Progress
\$1,039,580	Early Head Start/Head Start, Gulf Coast Community Services
\$881,002	Harris County Dept. of Education (To expand Head Start program)
\$656,474	El Centro del Corazon Community Health Center
\$632,544	Head Start, Harris County
\$607,239	Pasadena Health Center
\$589,635	Denver Harbor Community Health Center
\$47,705	Head Start, Galena Park ISD

## 8th Annual Job Fair

**Monday, May 17**

10:00am – 4:00pm

Jacinto City Town Center  
1025 Oates Road

Congressman Green to host Annual Job Fair in partnership with Workforce Solutions providing a wide variety of employers who will be offering full and part-time opportunities from administrative, clerical, technology, construction and other sectors. Free on-site resume critiquing and 40 companies are expected to participate.



January 30, 2010, more than 200 cars lined up to drop-off tons of electronic waste filling up two 18-wheeler trailers. In all, 12.81 tons of scrap computers, monitors, printers, and TVs were collected. The event was held in conjunction with the City of Houston and Houston City Council Member Ed Gonzalez. In May of 2009, I introduced H.R. 2595 the Electronic Waste Recycling Reform Act of 2009 with Rep. Mike Thompson (CA-1). This will restrict export of unusable electronics and ban export of electronics that don't meet standards created by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). In the U.S., over 2.6 million tons of e-waste is produced every year and e-waste is becoming an increasing problem in landfills in Houston and across the country. However, we can create jobs on our soil by recycling that equipment ourselves.

### Legislation to Create American Jobs continued

enforcement officers, \$500 million for firefighter jobs, and \$750 million for competitive grants to support job training for individuals in high growth and emerging industry sectors.

Families across the country are still hurting and working families are having trouble making ends meet. The bill includes \$41 billion to extend unemployment insurance for six months, \$12.3 billion to extend from 9 to 15 months the 65% COBRA health insurance subsidy for those who have lost their jobs, \$354 million to allow the Small Business Administration (SBA) to continue 2 temporary loan guarantee authorities through the end of fiscal year 2010 to make loans more attractive to borrowers and enable lenders to free up capital.

On February 24, the Senate passed their version of the Jobs for Main Street Act in a vote of 70-28, which was cut drastically to \$15 billion but still provides the much needed aid to stimulate job creation across the country.

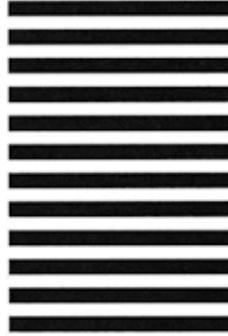
The main component of the Senate's version is \$13 billion in payroll tax relief for businesses that hire new workers. It also contains extensions of the Highway Trust Fund, the Build America Bonds program, and expense deductions for small businesses.

Now that the House and Senate have each passed bills, both Houses of Congress can work together to create one compromise bill to best utilize resources to create American jobs. Please continue to check our website for updates.

For Assistance Call  
Office of the Secretary of State  
Toll Free:  
*Si necesita asistencia  
llame gratis al:*  
Cần giúp đỡ xin gọi văn phòng  
Secretary of State số:  
1-800-252-VOTE (8683)  
www.sos.state.tx.us



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One of the very first changes we will see with this legislation is small businesses with 25 employees or less and average wages of less than \$50,000 a year will qualify for tax credits of up to 50% of the costs of providing health insurance. There are up to 14,600 small businesses in the district that could qualify for these credits. Additionally, small businesses with 100 employees or less will be able to join the state based health insurance exchange. This will enable them to access group rates and a greater choice of insurers. There are 16,600 small businesses in the district that could benefit from this provision. However, recognizing that coverage is unaffordable for many small businesses, those with fewer than 50 employees are exempt from the shared responsibility requirement that begins in 2014.

This legislation does not allow federal funding for abortion. It maintains the current law, which has prohibited the use of federal funds for abortion since 1975. Immediately after the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act was signed into law, the president signed an Executive Order reaffirming that no federal funds allocated under this legislation may be used for abortion services.

This legislation will also cut the federal deficit by \$143 billion in the first 10 years, followed by another reduction of up to \$1.2 trillion in the second 10 years. This is done largely through the elimination of waste, fraud, and abuse in Medicare. Other revenue provisions are to be phased in to ease the transition of health reform.

This landmark legislation is needed in our area and across the nation. Some say that this will be a government takeover; in fact private health insurance is expanded and the legislation is based on increasing choice and competition. This is achieved by bringing 32 million more people into the market and creating the state-based exchanges where individuals, small business employees, and the self-employed can choose from private insurance plans. In fact, the increased competition will allow health care costs to come down, then making it more profitable for businesses to expand. We expect 4 million new jobs in the first 10 years alone.

This is solid legislation and necessary reform. Please continue to check our website for updated resources and information and do not hesitate to contact one of our offices if we may be of assistance.

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*Health Reform in Our District continued*

a ban on coverage denials for pre-existing conditions. In our district alone, 34,500 residents with pre-existing conditions will now be able to receive health insurance. The bill also improves current coverage by reducing the cost of preventative care and allowing young adults to remain on their parents' policies until their 26th birthday.

In the original House bill, a public option was included that would allow individuals to receive health insurance coverage through a government-administered program. This provision was dropped in the Senate bill and was not included in the final legislation. Instead, the new law provides states with federal assistance for each state to establish their own state based health insurance exchange by 2014. Each state will run their own health insurance exchange that must adhere to federal minimum health benefit standards that will guarantee all individuals have access to quality and affordable health insurance coverage.

Currently, our district has one of the highest uninsured rates in the country – 43% of our constituents are uninsured. This legislation will allow the 223,500 residents of our district that do not currently have health insurance, to purchase insurance at group rates through the new state exchange. Tax credits will be available to help middle class families with incomes up to \$88,000 for a family of four pay for coverage.

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Official Business



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Si le gustaría recibir una copia de este noticiero en español, hágame el favor de escribirme a 256 N. Sam Houston Pkwy E., Ste. 29, Houston, TX 77060. Si es más fácil, también puede llamar a nuestra oficina para recibir el noticiero al 281 999-5879.

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