



Congressman Gene Green Reports

Dear Friend,

This newsletter is focused on senior citizen and veteran issues, and includes information on Social Security, Medicare, and VA funding requests. The newsletter also provides information on federal funding for local transportation projects and our upcoming events.

Memorial Day is Monday, May 30. This is the day we honor all veterans, particularly those who made the ultimate sacrifice. Our office will be hosting the annual Veterans Forum on Saturday, May 14 at the American Legion Post 472 from 9:00am to 10:00am to provide information to veterans and to listen to their concerns. Veterans Affairs and Medical Center staff will be present to answer questions. I encourage those of you who have served in our military and your family to attend. We will also be hosting a blood drive to support the Armed Services Blood Program Office on June 4 at the Army National Guard Armory in Pasadena from 9:00am to 1:00pm.

On May 20 we'll have our next Job Fair at Jacinto City Town Center from 9:00am to 1:00pm. Please come dressed professionally to speak with dozens of local employers.

You are welcome to attend any of our events that are of interest to you, but you need not wait to contact me. If you have issues of immediate concern, please call any of my offices and I will return your call. It is an honor to serve my district.

Sincerely,

Gene Green
Member of Congress

Support for Our Country's Veterans

The House and the Senate continue to work with the President on how to best approach our fiscal future. We must determine where to best cut spending, across party lines and branches of government. Our commitment remains to military veterans. The continuing resolution that funds the government for the rest of FY2011 provides a \$3.4 billion increase for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

Our country is fighting two wars where improvised explosive devices (IEDs) are used regularly, and soldiers are coming home with the need for specialized care. The VA FY2012 budget request provides \$6 billion for traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress, and other psychological and cognitive health needs.

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Congressman Green joined colleagues to make remarks on the importance of remembering our active duty military. Operation USO Care Package is the only program of its kind endorsed by both the Department of Defense and the White House. It has distributed more than 2 million care packages to our troops since its inception.



Upcoming Events

Saturday, May 14, 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Veterans' Forum

American Legion Harrisburg Post 472
7599 Avenue C, Houston, Texas 77012

Friday, May 20, 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Job Fair

Jacinto City Town Center
1025 Oates Road, Jacinto City, Texas 77029

Saturday, June 4, 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Armed Services Blood Drive

Army National Guard Armory
2917 San Augustine Ave., Pasadena, Texas 77503

Saturday, June 11, 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Citizenship Day

Houston Community College, Northline Campus
8001 Fulton, Houston, Texas 77022

Contact Us

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www.house.gov/green/



Congressman Gene Green addresses the 1/149th Civil Affairs Battalion, Texas Army National Guard during a new building dedication ceremony on March 5, 2011 at Ellington Joint Reserve Base in Houston, Texas.

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The VA budget request also allows for the expansion of benefits and medical care for veterans' caregivers with \$208 million for specialized training, stipends, health care and mental health services. The funds are meant to improve the standard of care we provide for our veterans by keeping better qualified and trained caregivers.

Overall, the President's FY2012 budget request for the VA is \$61.85 billion to continue to improve medical care, speed processing through a paperless claims system, and implement an automated claims processing system for delivery of Post-9/11 GI Bill education benefits. It also provides a 12% increase for gender-specific health needs.

It is important that our veterans not only receive the support of Congress, but that we, as a community, show our appreciation for their valor and valued service. On June 4, we'll be holding a blood drive for the Armed Services Blood Program Office (ASBPO). The ASBPO was established by Presidential Order in 1952 and manages the blood program for the Department of Defense. One donation can save three lives from the battlefield to military families here at home. Please come help us support our military service members and their families.

To see the complete budget request and programmatic levels, please visit www.va.gov

The Future of Medicare

As Congress struggles to reign in deficit spending we will be looking to streamline programs and reduce government waste. This means we will have to take a good hard look at Medicare and how we can sustain this highly successful health care program for 45 million seniors in our country and the 46,286 seniors in our district according to the 2010 Census.

Medicare is a program that works for our seniors and I want to continue to make improvements to ensure it is in existence for future generations. That's why I was disappointed and alarmed when I reviewed Congressman Paul Ryan (R-WI) and the House Budget Committee's FY2012 budget proposal. This budget proposal makes over \$30 billion in cuts to Medicare over 10 years, seeks to eliminate Medicare, and shift all seniors over to private insurance plans after 2022.

Beginning in 2022, Congressman Ryan's budget proposal would convert the current Medicare system to a system of premium support payments. Individuals, when they turn 65 and Disability Insurance beneficiaries who become eligible for Medicare in 2022 or later, would not enroll in the current Medicare program but would receive vouchers to purchase private insurance plans. In addition, the proposal would increase the age of eligibility for Medicare for 2 months per year until it reaches 67 in 2033.

According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the Ryan budget proposal would more than double Medicare beneficiary costs in 2022, from \$5,538 to \$12,513, which is an increase of nearly \$7,000 per year in beneficiary premiums and co-insurance. *Not one dollar* of that increase in beneficiary costs goes to reducing the deficit—it all goes to cover the higher costs of private plans. Additionally, the average 65-year-old in 2030 would have to pay about 68 percent of their health care costs (through premiums and copayments), compared with 25 percent under current rules.

This is not the type of system we want for our seniors. Shifting individuals from a program like Medicare that works to private

9th Annual North Channel Job Fair

Friday, May 20, 2011 / 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Jacinto City Town Center
1025 Oates Road
Jacinto City, TX 77029

Please join me for our 9th Annual North Channel Job Fair on Friday, May 20 from 9:00am to 1:00pm at the Jacinto City Town Center. Please dress professionally and bring copies of your resume to speak with representatives from dozens of local businesses that are looking to hire. There will also be representatives from the Electrical and Plumbing Apprenticeship Program available, as well as resume critiquing and interview assistance. For more information, please contact Ms. Yuroba Harris in Congressman Green's office at 281-999-5879.

Houston Loses a Shuttle

On April 12, NASA Administrator Charlie Bolden made the shocking announcement that Houston would not be receiving one of four orbiter shuttles. Instead, they are going to Kennedy Space Center, the California Science Center in Los Angeles, the Smithsonian in Virginia, and Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum in New York. It's unbelievable that the Administrator decided Houston was undeserving of a retired space shuttle. For months prior to the decision, I joined my colleagues from Houston and Texas in a concerted effort in the form of delegation letters, calls, and press conferences supporting a shuttle for Houston. Unfortunately, our efforts were unsuccessful but we are still looking for options to overturn the decision.

insurance plans that are only interested in making a profit is no way to reduce government spending and our deficit. In fact, the Ryan proposal once again shifts the burden of reducing the deficit to the taxpayer and our seniors.

Health Care Law Updates

Congress passed the Affordable Care Act that is now the law also known as health reform. While some opponents of the law challenge it in the court system, citizens can take advantage of patient protections that are already in effect.

One of the greatest costs to our health care system is the strain to our hospitals' emergency rooms. The health reform law makes it easier for patients to have access to primary care though funding for additional primary care physicians and community health centers, rather than going to the emergency room each time they get sick. Accessing primary care in community health centers or through primary care physicians relieves the strain on emergency rooms and reduces uncompensated care costs for the state.

Included in health reform are funds for community health centers across the country, including millions of dollars for health centers in the 29th Congressional District of Texas. These include Pasadena, Denver Harbor, Northside, Eastwood, and El Centro de Corazon. Health centers provide

high quality and comprehensive primary care, in addition to being cost effective by reducing emergency, hospital, and specialty care—which saves the health care system \$24 billion a year nationally according to the National Association of Community Health Centers.

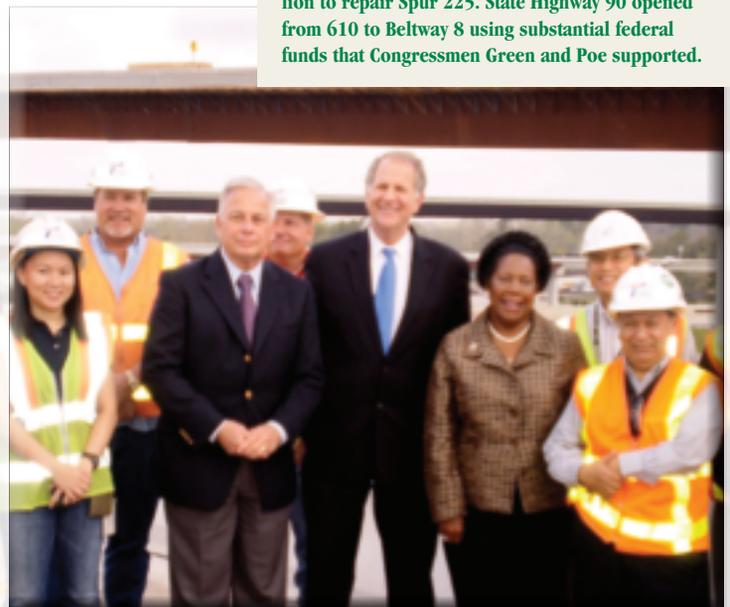
A hotly debated aspect of the law is the establishment of insurance exchanges. Each state has the choice to run their own insurance exchange or leave it to the federal government. If you've previously been dropped by your insurance company, the Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan (PCIP) is already running in Texas. Beginning in 2014, Texas will have a state-based insurance exchange where individuals and small businesses can shop for quality and affordable health insurance. The insurance plans will be provided by private insurance companies, not a government plan administered by the federal government. Texas has yet to agree to establish our health insurance exchange, but they have accepted planning grants from the federal government

to begin to do so and if they do not opt to set up an exchange, the federal government will establish one.

Our state has the highest rates of the uninsured in the nation. Health reform will not only expand access to quality affordable care for Texans, but it will protect your coverage from being cancelled.

I hope you will continue to study the health reform law to see which benefits are to your advantage, and the benefits that will become available as it is implemented over the coming years. Please visit www.health-care.gov for more information.

Congressman Green participated in the ribbon cutting of the U.S. 59 and Beltway 8 connectors. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) project received \$42.6 million from the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA). Other TxDOT projects that received ARRA funding include \$13 million for the SH 146 at Spur 330 flyover, \$50 million to rebuild Interstate 610, and \$1.375 million to repair Spur 225. State Highway 90 opened from 610 to Beltway 8 using substantial federal funds that Congressmen Green and Poe supported.



Social Security Update

Last October, the Social Security Administration (SSA) announced that 2011 would be the second year in a row that Social Security recipients would not receive a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA). This is due to the formula used by SSA to determine what inflation Social Security recipients have faced over the past 12 months. While the formula may have found that seniors and wounded veterans have not faced cost increases over the past 12 months, we all know for a fact that the cost of food, gasoline and health care are still climbing. It is simply not fair for those who have paid into Social Security for decades to be faced with climbing costs without some increase to their benefits.

For this reason, I have advocated a change in the formula used for calculating Social Security's annual COLA. Two bills this year, H.R. 456, the Consumer Price Index for Elderly Consumers Act, and H.R. 539, the Preserving Our Promise to Seniors Act, will improve Social Security's current COLA formula by indexing it to seniors' costs by using a formula that specifically measures cost increases faced by older Americans.

Though it will not be officially announced until October, it appears that the formula used by SSA will report a cost-of-living adjustment for 2012 for our nation's seniors and wounded veterans. It is my hope that the

COLA increase will cover any possible increases to Medicare, and I will fight to make sure that our community's seniors are not victims of the rising cost of medical care, food and energy

Be assured that I will continue to be an ardent supporter of Social Security and will continue to work on maintaining the program's solvency so it will be around for our children and grandchildren. In addition, I will not support privatization schemes that would take money out of the Social Security Trust Fund. It was only two years ago that our nation's major stock exchanges witnessed major losses. Social Security is a program that was designed to provide peace-of-mind to our nation's seniors—not as Wall Street's latest bailout.

Armed Services Blood Drive

Saturday, June 4, 2011 / 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Army National Guard Armory
2917 San Augustine Ave.
Pasadena, TX 77503

Please join us in supporting our military service members and their families by contributing blood to the Armed Services Blood Program Office (ASBPO). The ASBPO was established by Presidential Order in 1952 and manages the blood program for the Department of Defense. One donation can save three lives. For more information, please call 281-999-5879.

All of the facts and figures in this newsletter are based upon the following sources: the U.S. Census, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Health Resources and Services Administration, the Social Security Administration, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Library of Congress, and the Congressional Budget Office. Information regarding legislation may be found through the Library of Congress or through www.House.gov.

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

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