

### Thursday, September 6, 2007

In the Holbrook Fire Department, on a warm night at the end of August, a group of constituents discussed what was on their minds.

I listened to their views about the war in Iraq and immigration and reduced funding for HIV/AIDS programs. One gentleman brought a large box filled with legal documents regarding his divorce. Several families grouped together to urge additional funding for juvenile diabetes research. There were veterans with casework about long overdue disability payments and seniors concerned about Medicare. And others.

Congressional business was adjourned for August and members returned home to their districts. This is why the month is described in the press as “congressional recess” or even “Congress on vacation.” And while the pace is unmistakably slower, it’s not exactly a month on the beach and this time was taken very seriously.

Here are some highlights:

- Melville - One of the most effective ways to hear opinions of constituents is to visit them on the job. During August, I toured several local businesses, speaking to employees about health care, taxes, traffic and more global concerns. On a visit to Northrop Grumman in Melville I announced the House passage of \$6 million for production of a radar system that will create jobs and protect our ships from an attack like the one on the USS Cole.
- East Northport - Few meetings are as difficult and as sober as those held with families who lost someone in Iraq or Afghanistan. The Scherer family living room in East Northport is decorated with pictures of their fallen Marine, Christopher. We talked about his life and what we, as a nation, owe back to his family.
- Hauppauge – Two young men at Phoenix House told stories of redemption. Both were addicted to drugs and both felt their lives plunging into absolute despair. Thanks to the treatment they received, they are clean. One hopes to become a social worker, the other an English teacher. I recently obtained \$100,000 in funding for Phoenix House so they can continue this work.
- District Attorney Tom Spota and I have been working on an initiative to help Suffolk County expand the investigation and prosecution of crimes against the elderly. Together, we announced that I secured \$200,000 for this critical effort.
- Northport – The leaders of Northport’s veterans’ community met with me to discuss their massive funding needs thanks to years of inadequate VA budgets. Before Congress recessed, we passed the largest increase in the 77-year history of the VA. Sadly, there are still needs that continue to be unmet.

## WHAT I DID OVER SUMMER RECESS

Wednesday, September 05, 2007

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- Asharoken – The Mayor of Asharoken and I met with the US Army Corps of Engineers to discuss erosion issues. Asharoken is the northernmost point of my congressional district. On Fire Island, the southernmost point, I visited with the Superintendent of the Fire Island National Seashore to discuss funding issues.
- Brentwood – At the offices of PRONTO, I announced funds for an educational program that will help individuals achieve their high school equivalency degrees and expand our economy.
- Sayville – The US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Federal Aviation Agency have agreed on a deal to preserve one hundred acres in Sayville as part of the Long Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex. I visited the site to announce that this critical environmental area will not be developed.

There are other meetings as well: a civil meeting with the Respect For Life Ministry of Our Lady of the Snow Parish to discuss the contentious issue of abortion; meetings at Brookhaven National Lab with my Next Generation Energy Security Initiative Task Force; meetings in my district office in Hauppauge; and an Energy Congressional Delegation to Iceland (which is planning on becoming one of the world's first green energy economies), Chernobyl (seeking significant U.S. funds to contain the still-radioactive nuclear plant) and the Netherlands (leading the world in flood prevention and the development of wind power).

Now, Congress is back in session in Washington. And I will apply what I heard and what I saw during my so-called summer vacation at home to my deliberations.