

PATTY MURRAY'S WASHINGTON VIEW

U.S. Senator Patty Murray's Weekly Report to the People of Washington – December 18, 2009

Health Care: A Real Story, A Real Solution

Yesterday on the floor of the Senate, I highlighted the benefits of the health insurance reform bill for Washington state families and small business owners. I also told the story of Doreen Kelsey from Spokane to help demonstrate the urgent need for health insurance reform that will bring families stable, affordable health insurance coverage. I talked about Doreen's two-year fight with her insurance company, and then detailed the ways that the reform plan would help Doreen, her family, and the millions of Americans facing similar struggles.– [Details](#)

[Listen to Senator Murray's speech](#)

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Community Banks: Boosting Lending to our Small Businesses

Last Thursday, I unveiled a major new legislative initiative to assist community banks in increasing lending to small businesses and families in an effort to create jobs and boost economic recovery efforts. My bill, The Main Street Lending Restoration Act, will direct TARP funding to the community banks on Main Street instead of the big banks on Wall Street. This will help small businesses, our country's biggest job creators, access the loans they need to expand, pay their bills, and hire workers. [Details](#) | [Read more](#) about the difficulties community banks face and how this bill helps.

["Murray seeks federal help for state's struggling community banks"](#)
– Bellingham Herald, Tacoma News Tribune

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MILITARY: Getting Answers for Troops Whose Combat Records Where Left Off Critical Forms

Last Thursday, I sent a letter to Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki calling on them to provide information on how their departments are tracking combat experiences among our support troops, and how tracking can be improved to ensure these men and women are getting the care and benefits they deserve. My letter is an effort to get answers for support troops, including many women servicemembers, who have noted that their combat experiences were never included on their military discharge papers. Because of these omissions, many support troops have had difficulty accessing care and benefits for combat related conditions, including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) – [Read my letter](#) to Secretaries Gates and Shinseki.

["Female soldiers wounded in combat, but denied benefits"](#) – KING-5 TV

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Environment: Bill Protecting Alpine Lakes Wilderness Area Passes Key Senate Committee

On Wednesday, bills that I introduced to expand the Alpine Lakes Wilderness area and designate both the Pratt and Middle Fork Snoqualmie Rivers as Wild and Scenic passed the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. My bill, the Alpine Lakes Wilderness Additions and Pratt and Middle Fork Snoqualmie Rivers Protection Act, will expand the existing wilderness by over 22,000 acres to include important lower-elevation lands and watersheds – [Details](#)

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Returning Federal Investment to Our State

Last week, I worked to pass many of the Senate's annual appropriations bills for the upcoming year. I worked hard to ensure that these bills invest where we need help the most right now - in jobs and our communities. Whether it is building new roads, expanding health research, or supporting law enforcement, the projects I worked to fund in our state help us to meet many of the challenges facing Washington state families. Particularly now, as our state budget continues to struggle, I have worked to ensure that our federal tax dollars are returned to fund projects in our own backyard.

Learn more about the [Washington state projects](#) included in these bills.

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