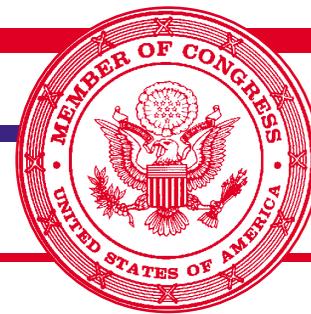




Congressman Terry

EVERETT

WASHINGTON UPDATE



Second Congressional District

Winter 2004

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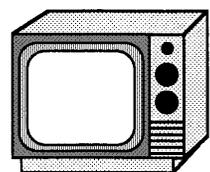
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Alabama's Defense Jobs Face BRAC

Alabama's Four Military Bases are Big Business for State and Workers

Alabama's economy is more than agriculture, forestry, and industry. It's also heavily tied to the Federal government through four large military bases - Maxwell-Gunter Air Force Base in Montgomery, Fort Rucker in the Wiregrass, the Anniston Army Depot, and Redstone Arsenal at Huntsville. Combined, they pump over \$5 billion into the state and employ more than 50,000 workers.

When the recommendations of the next Presidential Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) are announced in September of 2005, there will be a potential impact upon Alabama. The "2005 BRAC Round" will spell closure or downsizing for some U.S. military installations while benefiting others through mission growth.

Southeast Alabama Economy Heavily Tied to Military Bases' Future

The Second Congressional District is home to half of the state's military bases and has a lot riding on the BRAC commission's recommendations. Both Maxwell-Gunter and Fort Rucker are by far the largest single employers in Southeast Alabama. In January, I joined Governor Bob Riley, Senator Jeff Sessions, and Congressman Mike Rogers in touring our military bases in preparation for the new BRAC Round.

While the 2005 BRAC Commission has yet to be organized, the Pentagon has suggested a number of factors it might use to determine the strength or weakness of a military base. These include: the base's ability to accept new missions; the availability of land and airspace for expansion; community support; as well as the economic and environmental impact of a base's closing.

Supporting Mission Growth at Maxwell-Gunter and Fort Rucker

Maxwell-Gunter Air Force Base is the center of Air Force professional education and the home of the Air University and the Air War College. Together with the Standards Systems Group (secure combat communications support) at Gunter Annex, and the 908th Air Reserve Airlift Unit, Maxwell has a \$1.2 billion annual economic impact on central Alabama, employing nearly 13,000.

Since coming to Congress in 1993, I have secured nearly \$270 million in military construction funds for Maxwell-Gunter, and its facilities are among the most modern of any of America's top military installations. I've also supported upgrades for the 187th Fighter Wing of the Alabama Guard based at Montgomery Regional Airport.

Fort Rucker is the home of U.S. Army Aviation; the training center for Army helicopter pilots. Not only has Fort Rucker been substantially modernized in the last 11 years, with more than \$168 million I secured, but also, it has ample room for mission growth, both in the air and on the ground. With access to urban and rural terrain and the Gulf of Mexico, its mission would be very difficult to relocate. Fort Rucker's annual economic impact approaches \$1 billion and it employs over 12,000.

Alabama is well-poised to gain from the new BRAC and state lawmakers are leaving nothing to chance as we approach this important decision time.



Support for Military and Veterans

America's men and women in uniform, both active duty and reserve, as well as military retired and veterans, have fought for our freedom and earned our support. I was pleased to have been honored for work in Congress on behalf of our military by the Alabama Department of the Reserve Officers Association which presented me with their Major General Horace B. Hanson Minuteman Award during the National Veterans' Day Awards Dinner in Birmingham on November 10.

(Photo: Alabama Department of R.O.A.)

Retired Disabled Military Begin Seeing Increased Benefits

The Fiscal Year 2004 Defense Authorization bill (HR 1588), which was passed into law in November, authorized \$22 billion over ten years to phase-in dual benefits for those military retirees who are rated 50 percent disabled or higher by the Veterans Administration (VA). This new benefit is also available to Reservists and National Guard members who are injured in the line of duty.

Known as "concurrent receipt", the new benefit ends, in part, a 100-year-old prohibition barring disabled military retirees from receiving both their full service retirement pay and their full disability compensation.

I supported the passage of HR 1588 with the concurrent receipt provisions and am also a cosponsor of HR 303, legislation to completely phase out the 100-year-old payment ban. HR 303 would allow all disabled retired military to collect the dual benefit.



Joining Forces to Protect Our Military Bases

In January, I joined Governor Bob Riley, Senator Jeff Sessions, and Congressman Mike Rogers in touring our Second District military bases as part of a state and local effort to strengthen these valuable installations as they face national base closure commission scrutiny in 2005. During the base tour, we visited Fort Rucker, the scene of our local news conference pictured above. See related story on page one.

(Photo: James Bullinger)

Protecting Our Borders and Communities

Immigration Laws Must Be Enforced

In the wake of the tragic events of September 11, 2001, America has heightened scrutiny of its national borders to ensure that the country is safe from further terrorist activity.

In recent months, there has been discussion in Washington about allowing foreign workers already in America illegally to obtain three-year work visas for jobs that employers here find hard to fill.

With a long record in Congress supporting tough immigration laws, I have never voted for amnesty for illegal aliens and do not foresee supporting amnesty in the future.

I am an original cosponsor of HJ Res 42, a Constitutional Amendment to deny U.S. citizenship to individuals born in the U.S. to parents who are not American citizens and do not owe permanent allegiance to the United States.

Furthermore, I have cosponsored HR 489, the Social Security for Americans Only Act of 2003. This legislation would help ensure that illegal aliens would be barred from participating in the U.S. Social Security program.

There is no doubt that people want to come to the United States for a better future. However, immigrants who do come here must follow our laws and contribute to our society. Living in America is a privilege, not an entitlement.

Military Survivors' Benefits Under Review

Congress to Consider Expanded Coverage

Congress has a slate of expanded veterans' benefits it will consider during 2004. Here are some of the highlights.

Following last year's passage of concurrent receipt for retired disabled military, improvements to the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) are likely to receive the most attention this year. I am an original cosponsor of the Military Survivor Benefits Improvement Act (HR 3763), which would eliminate the reduction in Survivor Benefit Plan annuities that now impacts survivors who are age 62 and older. This bill would also authorize a one-year open season to allow currently un-enrolled retirees to enroll.

I am also a cosponsor of the Early Military Retirement Bill (HR 742), which would reduce from 60 to 55 the minimum age for the receipt of military retired pay for members of the Reserve and National Guard who have served at least 20 years. Moreover, I have cosponsored the Retired Pay Restoration Act (HR 303), which would provide full concurrent receipt of military retired pay and veterans' disability compensation.

Last year, Congress passed into law legislation to enhance beneficiary access to health care under the newly established TRICARE Standard Program for military retirees. It requires the Department of Defense to assist beneficiaries and health care providers in their participation in the TRICARE Standard program. In addition, the Pentagon is directed to survey and determine health care provider acceptance of the TRICARE Standard benefit and to designate a senior official who is responsible for ensuring adequate levels of health care provider participation in the TRICARE Standard program are achieved and maintained.

These provisions enhance benefits that were included in the Fiscal Year 2001 Defense Authorization Act (Public Law 106-398) which provided the TRICARE for Life program, a \$6 to \$8 billion per year healthcare program. That new entitlement for Medicare-eligible military retirees and their dependents requires the Defense Department to act as a second payer for medical services that Medicare does not cover.

Public Law 106-398 also created the TRICARE Senior Pharmacy Program that went into effect on April 1, 2001. It allows military retirees over 65 to participate in the TRICARE mail order pharmacy program.

America owes a debt to our veterans, and Congress is committed to ensuring our former servicemembers receive the benefits that they are due.



Federal Grant Means Jobs for Central Alabama

Nearly \$5 million in Federal Economic Development Agency funding was presented to city officials from Montgomery, Greenville, and Shorter during a ceremony at the Alabama Center for Commerce in Montgomery on October 9. U.S. Economic Development Agency Secretary David Sampson announced the funds' approval and attended the check presentation.

I was pleased to support this funding which helps provide infrastructure for new Hyundai suppliers in these cities. Above, I joined in presenting an EDA check to the City of Greenville for \$1.5 million. The funds will be used for water and sewer improvements impacting Greenville's two new Hyundai supplier plants currently under construction.



Greenville's Hwashin Plant

The City of Montgomery received \$2 million in EDA funds to help offset the cost of sewer and water system upgrades relating to the new Hyundai plant south of town.

(Photos: Montgomery Chamber of Commerce, and Don Lewis)

Congress to “Clean-Up” America’s Airwaves

Legislation Introduced to Block Foul Language On-Air

In response to the public outrage over foul language and obscene behavior on broadcast television during prime time family viewing, Congress is currently drafting legislation to clean up America’s public airwaves.

The recent Super Bowl halftime show incident is but the latest example of how far celebrities and entertainers have pushed the limits of broadcast decency to the detriment of our children. During the nationally-televised January 2003 Golden Globe Awards from Hollywood, the singer Bono from U-2 uttered uncensored obscene language in describing how thrilled he was to receive his award. To quote him, “This is really, really, f—ing brilliant.” His use of the “F-word” on network television created an uproar from offended viewers and a number of complaints were filed before the Federal Communications Commission.

After reviewing the case, the FCC ruled last October that Bono had not violated Federal obscenity rules since he used the “F-word” as an adjective. The FCC commissioners noted Bono’s comments “may be crude and offensive,” but not indecent since they were used in a context which did not depict sexual or excretory activities which would meet the legal definition of indecency.

Needless to say this reinterpretation of Federal decency law by the FCC generated howls of protests from citizens across the country. I have received literally thousands of emails from Second District residents outraged over the FCC ruling.

In response, Congress has been busy writing several bills to strictly enforce Federal indecency laws on radio and television. Two bills which I have cosponsored, HR 3717 and H. Res. 482, are gaining support in the U.S. House. The stronger of the two, The Broadcast Decency Enforcement Act of 2004 (HR 3717), was introduced by the chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet, U.S. Rep. Fred Upton, R-Michigan.

Chairman Upton’s bill, which was the subject of a January 28 congressional hearing, takes tough action against broadcasters who violate Federal indecency laws by increasing the amount of fines which can be levied from \$27,500 a violation to \$275,000. It also raises the cap of \$300,000 for a continuing violation to \$3 million. These penalties are significant enough that even broadcast networks will finally take notice.

In the wake of the tremendous public outcry over its unpopular ruling regarding the Bono incident, FCC Chairman Michael Powell has indicated that his agency would likely reverse its decision. That is a good first step. Congress has put the FCC on notice that it expects the commission to do its job and enforce Federal decency laws. I am also hopeful that HR 3717 can soon be passed into law to send a strong signal that improper language will not be tolerated.

Radio and television stations have a responsibility to the public to maintain existing Federally-imposed decency standards in their programming and Congress is committed to holding them accountable.



Federal Grant Signals Improved Air Service for Dothan

Thanks to a recent \$200,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation, Dothan Regional Airport has developed a marketing strategy to increase local air service by one flight, now providing six daily non-stop flights to Atlanta. Above, I joined with Dothan Regional Airport officials on February 9 for the announcement. The additional flight follows on the heels of Dothan’s airport being named an “air service development zone” by the USDOT last September, as well as the completion of the airport’s state-of-the-art new air terminal in late 2002. I was pleased to secure \$2 million in Federal funds for the new terminal.

(Photo: Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce)

Federal Funds Protect Elba and Geneva

On November 24, I had the pleasure of attending the groundbreaking for the new levee to protect Geneva from the flood waters of the Choctawhatchee River. Elba held its levee groundbreaking in May of 2002.

Since I’ve been in Congress, the area has suffered through two major floods. The citizens of Elba and Geneva have too frequently met with disaster, but have always rebounded with courage. I worked with the Alabama Congressional Delegation to seek necessary Federal funds to enable the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to rehabilitate the vital levees in Geneva and in Elba.

Congress passed the VA-HUD/Energy and Water Appropriations Act with \$19.2 million in Federal funds for the Elba and Geneva levee projects in 2000. This Federal funding was added to state monies also earmarked for the levees. Both levee projects are expected to take two years to complete.

EVERETT KEY VOTES, 108th Congress, First Session

YES • [National Defense Authorization Act \(HR 1588\)](#)
2004 Defense Bill, also funds \$22 billion for “concurrent receipt”
Passed the House on 11/7/03
Passed the Senate on 11/12/03
Signed into law on 11/24/03

YES • [Veterans Benefits Act of 2003 \(HR 2297\)](#)
\$1 billion over 10 years in new and expanded veterans benefits
Passed the House on 11/20/03
Passed the Senate on 11/19/03
Signed into law on 12/16/03

YES • [Partial Birth Abortion Ban \(HR 760\)](#)
Prohibits partial-birth abortions
Passed House on 10/2/03
Passed Senate on 10/21/03
Signed into law on 11/5/03

YES • [Military Family Tax Relief Act of 2003 \(HR 3365\)](#)
Provides servicemembers and their families with tax breaks on home sales, travel expenses, and death benefits
Passed House on 11/5/03; Passed Senate on 11/3/03
Signed into law on 11/11/03

YES • [National Cemetery Expansion Act of 2003 \(HR 1516\)](#)
Establishes six new national VA cemeteries including in Birmingham
Passed the House on 10/29/03
Passed the Senate on 10/17/03
Signed into law on 11/11/03

YES • [Healthy Forests Initiative \(HR 1904\)](#)
Restructures national forest management to prevent disastrous and deadly forest fires which threaten lives and communities
Passed the House on 11/21/03; Passed the Senate on 11/21/03
Signed into law on 12/3/03

Fighting Back Against Identity Theft

Congress Takes Steps to Arm Consumers

In December, legislation was signed into law making it easier for the public to check their credit records for abnormal activity and stop identify theft early.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) reports that identify theft has become a serious problem. It directly affected nearly 400,000 Americans in 2002, including 1,276 Alabamians. The actual number may be higher as many fail to report ID theft. For those who've fallen victim, it can literally take months or years to recover not only from the financial loss, but from the damage to one's personal credit rating.

The FTC notes that criminals intent on obtaining your vital information run the gamut from hacking business and personal computers to rummaging through your trash. From stealing your mail, to engaging in scam operations posing as business or government officials trying to get your personal information, ID thieves are very resourceful. Once they get their hands on your personal information, such as a Social Security number and date of birth, they are free to begin spending in your name.

Typically one of the best ways to stay ahead of identity theft is to regularly check your credit report for suspicious activity. Up until now, credit bureaus have been allowed to charge up to \$9 for this information. However, the new law passed by Congress will enable citizens to obtain annual credit reports free of charge, beginning later this year.

The just-enacted Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act does not stop there, however. It allows consumers to place "fraud alerts" in their credit reports to prevent identity thieves from opening accounts in their names, including special provisions to protect active duty military personnel. It allows consumers to block information from being given to a credit bureau and from being reported by a credit bureau if this information was the result of identity theft.

It establishes a nationwide system of fraud alerts for consumers to place in their credit files. Once a person files an alert, credit agencies would be required to verify the true identity of that person for any further credit requests. Furthermore, the new law orders lenders and credit agencies to take action before a victim even knows a crime has occurred.

Vigilance is the best protection against identity theft. Watch your accounts and personal information. Never give it to strangers or anyone you cannot be sure is who they claim to be.

For more information, call the FTC's toll-free hotline at 1-877-382-4357 (1-877-ID-HELP) or visit their web site <http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft/>.

To file an ID theft complaint, call the FTC at 1-877-438-4338 (1-877-438-ID-THEFT).



Discussing Funding for Juvenile Diabetes Research

I recently met with four Central Alabama young people regarding Federal funding for diabetes research. The newly enacted Consolidated Appropriations Act includes nearly \$1.7 billion for the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases at the National Institutes of Health. An additional \$150 million is also available to the Institute for juvenile diabetes. Taking part in the local Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation's "Promise to Remember Me Campaign" above are (left to right): Brad Shaw, Adrienne Brown, Jacquelynn Karsten, and Leigh Spigener.

Making Tax Relief Permanent

Tax relief passed by Congress over the last three years, ranging from nearly doubling the child tax credit, to reducing the marriage penalty tax, to the lowering of most individual tax rates, was the right action at the right time to get America moving forward.

Indeed, new home construction in 2003 was the highest in 25 years; home ownership levels are at historic heights; manufacturing activity is increasing; inflation and interest rates are low; and a quarter million jobs were created in the last half of 2003. The reason: the combined effects of the landmark Federal tax relief.

While the economy still has much improvement ahead, that's all the more reason to make the recently-enacted Federal tax relief for Americans permanent. Here in Alabama, the impact has been equally encouraging.

- More than 1.4 million Alabama taxpayers have seen their tax bills reduced.
- Over 300,000 small business taxpayers in Alabama have additional tax savings to invest in new equipment, expand facilities and hire additional workers.
- More than 450,000 Alabama married couples are benefiting from marriage penalty relief.
- Over 400,000 Alabama families have benefited from the child tax credit increase from \$600 to \$1000.

I supported these Federal tax relief measures and will work to see them made permanent this Congress. America cannot afford to go backward.

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Alabama's Second District

