



CONGRESSMAN CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

Dear Friend,

As this year comes to a close, I want to update you on the work that the Congress has done and the many challenges we face as we work to take America in a positive new direction.

I am proud of the record of the new Congress on domestic policy issues. The Congress has worked successfully to enact important legislation to reduce the cost of college; implement the bi-partisan 9-11 Commission recommendations; raise the national minimum wage; establish more accountability and transparency through lobbying and ethics reforms; help maintain America's competitive edge; increase veterans' health care benefits; and establish greater fiscal discipline. Nevertheless, we remain deeply frustrated by our inability to end the war in Iraq and bring our troops home in a safe and responsible manner. No one is more frustrated with this situation than those of us who opposed the war from the start and who believe that, as our intelligence agencies have publicly concluded, the war continues to fuel extremists in the region and around the world.

An indefinite U.S. troop presence in Iraq has allowed different factions there to postpone the day when they have to make the compromises necessary to achieve stability and national reconciliation. Earlier this year the Congress passed legislation, modeled after the bi-partisan Iraq Study Group's recommendations, to extract U.S. troops from the middle of Iraq's civil war, to redeploy the bulk of U.S. combat forces out of Iraq by March 2008, and to refocus the remaining forces on the more limited missions of protecting the U.S. Embassy, eliminating Al Qaeda elements, and training Iraqi forces. Unfortunately, President Bush vetoed this sensible plan and we have not had the two-thirds votes necessary to override his veto. Our efforts to pass legislation requiring that funds for Iraq be used solely for the purpose of implementing this plan have also been blocked. Despite these setbacks, I assure you that the Congress will continue to do everything in its power to press for the responsible redeployment of our combat forces from Iraq. At the same time, we must finish the job in Afghanistan. Twenty months ago, I warned in an op-ed in the Washington Post that the Taliban and Al Qaeda were gaining strength in Afghanistan and along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Unfortunately, that threat has continued to grow. We cannot afford to be distracted from our critical mission in Afghanistan against those who perpetrated the attacks of September 11, 2001.

Just as President Bush vetoed the Iraq legislation, he has also blocked our efforts to expand the Children's Health Insurance Program to 10 million children and bi-partisan legislation to provide federal funding for stem cell research to develop treatments and cures for many diseases. We will continue to push for a change of direction on these and other important issues.

I am grateful for the opportunity to continue to serve our community in the United States Congress and I will do my best to uphold the trust and confidence you have placed in me.

Sincerely,

*Chris Van Hollen*  
Congressman Chris Van Hollen

Congressman Chris Van Hollen  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

*Chris Van Hollen*  
M.C.  
ECRWSS  
PRSRT STD

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## Constituent Services Guide

Here are just some of the areas with which we can help you:



*Congressman Van Hollen meets with residents of Maryland's Eighth Congressional District to discuss important legislative initiatives and the services he and his staff provide to constituents.*

- Social Security and Medicare
- Federal Student Loans
- Federal Employee Issues
- Veterans and Military Assistance
- Passport Applications
- Immigration
- Internal Revenue Service
- Information About Legislative Issues
- Visits to the U.S. Capitol
- U.S. Service Academy Nominations

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# A Community Update from

# Update

## Congressman Chris Van Hollen



*Congressman Van Hollen speaks with constituents about some of the issues he is working on in the Congress.*



*Congressman Van Hollen delivers a hot meal and discusses legislative issues with a constituent.*



Maryland's Eighth Congressional District

Congressman Chris Van Hollen

# Getting Things Done for Our Community and Our Country

Congressman Van Hollen has been at the forefront of the fight in the Congress to move our country in a positive new direction. Here are some of the ways he's working for us.

## Making College More Affordable

The new Congress moved quickly to address the difficulty students and families face in paying for high college tuitions. Congressman Van Hollen helped spearhead the passage of the College Cost Reduction and Access Act which makes college more affordable by cutting in half the interest rates on federal student loans, increasing the maximum Pell grant, and providing tuition assistance for students who agree to teach. The cost of this initiative is entirely covered by reducing subsidies to lenders and banks. Closer to home, Congressman Van Hollen has secured \$500,000 in federal funding for Montgomery College's Biotechnology Project to provide students with job opportunities in the growing biotech industry. Another \$1.7 million in federal funding is pending in the appropriations process.

## Providing Quality, Affordable Health Care

Americans are being financially squeezed by the rising cost of health care. Congressman Van Hollen has introduced legislation to reduce the cost of prescription drugs and is working to protect the Medicare program. He is a sponsor of numerous bills to expand access to affordable quality health care and played a key role in passing the Children's Health Insurance Program to provide health care to 10 million children from working families. The cost of this health care is fully paid for by an increase in the federal tobacco tax, a measure supported by U.S. Surgeons General as the best way to reduce youth smoking. Although President Bush vetoed this important bill, the new Congress will continue to fight for it.



*Congressman Van Hollen discusses efforts in the Congress to provide affordable health care for children.*

## Keeping the U.S. Competitive in a Global Economy

The U.S. risks losing its competitive edge if we do not develop the next generation of scientists, mathematicians and engineers to spur the technology innovation of the future. To be the best innovators, we must be the best educators. Congressman Van Hollen successfully pushed for legislation to recruit and train 25,000 new math and science teachers over the next three years. The law also boosts our national investment in basic scientific research and creates incentives to more rapidly move from scientific discovery to applied uses in the marketplace. A separate bill will reverse the Bush Administration's cuts to the National Institutes of Health and enable the Institutes to support 600 new medical research proposals in the coming year.

## Protecting the Chesapeake Bay

As Co-Chair of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Task Force, Congressman Van Hollen has fought to protect this natural and national treasure. This year he led the successful effort to obtain a record level of federal support for the Chesapeake Bay clean-up effort in House legislation – an increase of \$504 million over the next five years. He also heads the Advisory Committee for the Trash-Free Potomac Initiative and has obtained federal funding to clean up the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers. These measures will be a major boost to our efforts to protect our rivers and save the Bay.

## More Open and Accountable Government

Our government should serve the public interest, not narrow special interests. Congressman Van Hollen helped lead the successful fight to enact what public interest watchdog groups have praised as a "landmark" new law on lobbying and ethics reform. The new law bans gifts, meals and travel from lobbyists and incorporates Congressman Van Hollen's measure to require greater disclosure of campaign finance practices. The new rules also include his legislation requiring transparency and accountability for spending earmarks.

## Supporting Our Veterans

Our troops are committed to leaving no soldier behind on the battlefield. Similarly, we must not leave our veterans behind when they return home. Congressman Van Hollen continues to work hard to provide our veterans with quality health care and ensure they receive the benefits they have earned. He pushed for \$20 million in emergency funds for Walter Reed and helped secure House passage of the



*Congressman Van Hollen presents long-overdue medals and other recognition to a World War II veteran.*

Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill, which provides the largest increase in funding for veterans' health care in the VA's 77-year history. This increase will allow for 1,000 new claims processors to reduce the backlog of 400,000 benefit claims. The House and Senate have also passed the Wounded Warriors Assistance Act to streamline access to promised benefits. Congressman Van Hollen has received the Meritorious Service Award from the Blinded American Veterans Foundation for his work on behalf of disabled American veterans.

## Building a Clean Energy Future

America must embark on an Apollo-like clean energy initiative. The House and Senate are engaged in a far-reaching effort to pass legislation to reduce our reliance on foreign oil, reverse global warming, and help American consumers. Congressman Van Hollen has been a leader in the effort to eliminate huge, wasteful subsidies to the oil and gas industry and redirect investments toward renewable energy and energy efficiency. He was also a chief sponsor of the successful House effort to require a national renewable electricity standard and authored a successful amendment to spur utility companies to offer consumers home energy audits to help lower energy bills. He is also pushing hard to enact legislation to require auto manufacturers to build more fuel-efficient vehicles and is an original cosponsor of legislation to establish a cap and trade system to dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



*Congressman Van Hollen discusses efforts in the Congress to clean up the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers.*