

# A Congressional Report from Congressman Chris Van Hollen



*Congressman Chris Van Hollen talks to students about what Congress is doing to improve our schools.*



CONGRESSMAN CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

Dear Friend,

The first eleven months of the new Congress have been a whirlwind of activity. We have worked closely with President Obama to confront the economic crisis at home and meet our challenges abroad. By all accounts, the 111th Congress has already been one of the most productive in recent history.

The centerpiece of the domestic agenda has been the Recovery Act and related measures. Taken together, the Economic Recovery Plan has begun to turn around the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. In Maryland, it has funded shovel-ready transportation projects, kept teachers in our children's classrooms, and allowed school modernization projects to advance. The Plan also provided funding for research through the National Institutes of Health and made unprecedented investments in clean energy technology. Without this historic investment, things would be much worse, but it will take time and additional effort to get our country back on track.

As we rebuild our economy at home, we must restore our credibility abroad. I support the Administration's plan to responsibly bring our forces home from Iraq by the end of 2011 and the development of a sound and sustainable policy in Afghanistan and Pakistan. We cannot succeed with military action alone, and I am pleased that the President has embraced legislation I introduced to spur economic development in parts of Afghanistan and Pakistan. That legislation has passed the House and is awaiting action in the Senate.

I am grateful for the opportunity to represent our community in the U.S. Congress at this moment of great challenge and opportunity. I will do my best to uphold the trust you have placed in me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris Van Hollen". The signature is fluid and cursive.

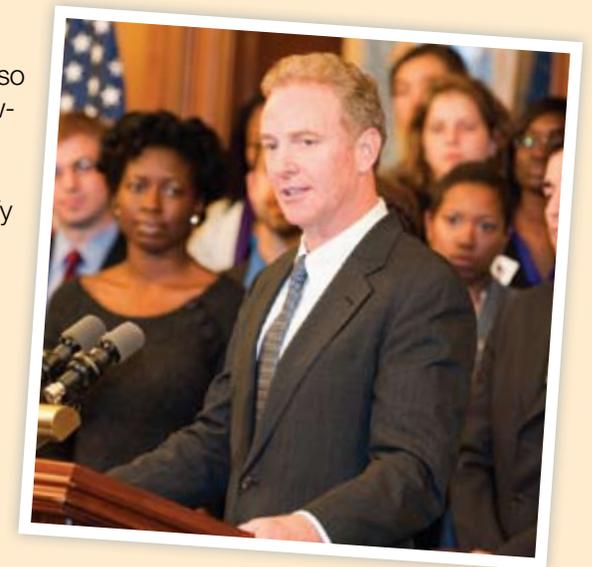
Congressman Chris Van Hollen

# Congressman Chris Van Hollen Getting Things Done for Our

## Early Highlights from the 111th Congress

*The first eleven months of the new Congress have been one of the most productive legislative periods in recent history, and Congressman Van Hollen has been a key leader in these successful efforts. The following measures have been passed by the Congress and signed into law by President Obama.*

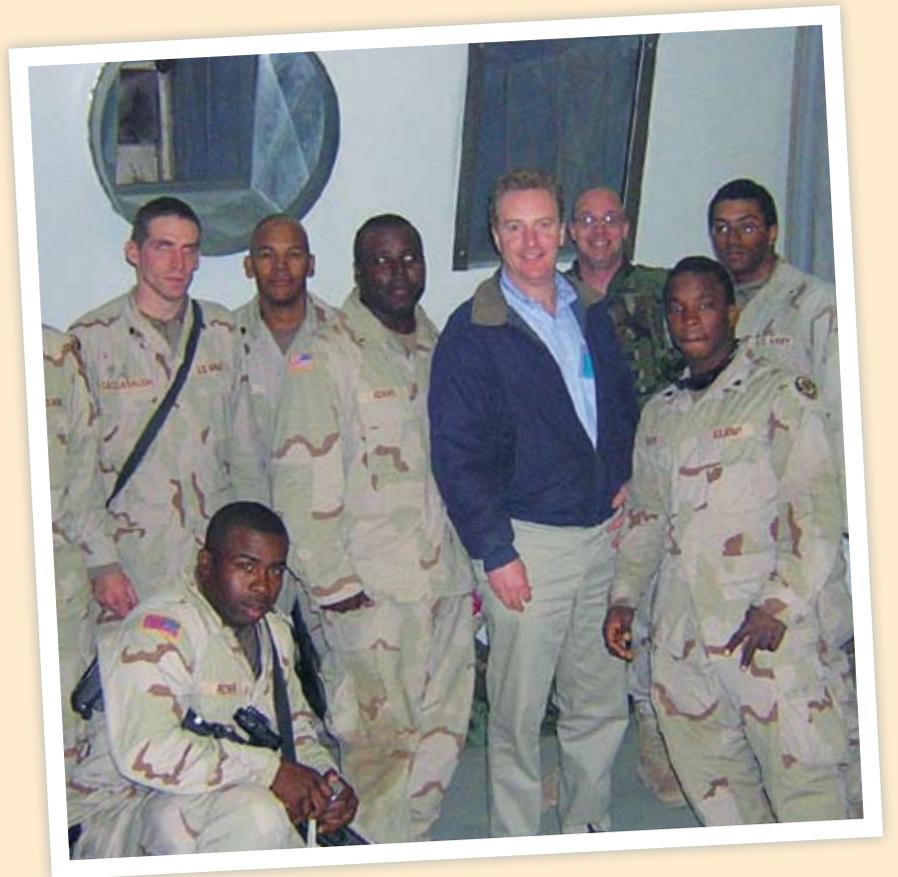
- ✓ **Stabilizing the economy** by slowing job losses through major investments in national priorities, easing the credit crunch, and reversing the worst economic collapse since the Great Depression. The Economic Recovery Plan has invested billions in our nation's schools, transportation network, scientific research, and clean energy initiatives. It also provided tax relief for 95% of working Americans, including 3 million Marylanders, which is the largest tax cut to low- and moderate-income workers in our country's history.
- ✓ **Helping families save their homes** by providing incentives for lenders and homeowners to work together to modify loans and avoid foreclosure. This legislation builds on the President's initiatives to stem the foreclosure crisis.
- ✓ **Protecting credit cardholders** from unfair and harmful practices, including excessive rate increases, abusive fees, double-cycle billing, confusing disclaimers, and predatory lending. Congressman Van Hollen supported the immediate implementation of these reforms, rather than a phased-in approach, and is now working to stop abuse with respect to debit cards. As part of this effort, Congressman Van Hollen is a cosponsor of the Consumer Overdraft Protection Fair Practices Act.
- ✓ **Expanding children's health care (S-CHIP)** for 4 million children who were uninsured, including about 65,000 in Maryland, and preserving health care for 7 million children already in the system.



*Congressman Van Hollen discusses how health insurance reform will help young adults.*

# Country and Our Community

- ✓ **Making historic gains for America's troops, veterans, and military families**, including an historic 40% increase in funding for quality VA health care since 2007. We are also implementing a New GI Bill to restore the promise of a full, four-year college education for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, and strengthening other benefits for our troops and military families.
- ✓ **Tripling public service opportunities for Americans** in fields like clean energy, education, health care, and veterans' assistance; increasing the educational award for AmeriCorps; and encouraging innovative community-based solutions to meet local needs (the Serve America Act).
- ✓ **Ensuring equal pay for equal work** by protecting the right of women and other workers to challenge unfair pay practices, closing the wage gap between men and women. This measure, known as the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, was the first bill signed by President Obama.
- ✓ **Reining in the tobacco industry** by finally giving the FDA the authority to regulate the advertising, marketing, and manufacturing of tobacco products. This will help reduce the over 6,600 kids in Maryland that become new daily smokers each year and the thousands who die prematurely from tobacco-related illnesses.
- ✓ **Protecting open space** with the most significant land conservation bill in 15 years, designating 2 million new acres as protected wilderness, and establishing new national parks.



*Congressman Van Hollen discusses military issues with Maryland service personnel.*

# Looking Ahead:

*While a great deal has been accomplished in the first eleven months of the 111th Congress, much remains to be done. In the coming months, Congressman Van Hollen will work with President Obama and others in Congress to strengthen our health care system, adopt a 21st century energy strategy, enact financial regulatory reform to prevent another economic collapse, restore fiscal responsibility to our nation, and make good on our commitment to our children by providing the best education in the world.*

**Health Care Reform.** Our nation has an historic opportunity to strengthen what works and to fix what's broken in our health care system. We must reduce skyrocketing health care costs, end the unfair practices of many insurance companies, and make affordable, quality health care available to all. Congressman Van Hollen believes the availability of a public option as part of an array of choices will increase competition and make insurance coverage more affordable.

## **21st Century Energy Strategy.**

Congressman Van Hollen is committed to passing energy legislation that will create millions of new clean energy jobs, reduce our dependence on foreign oil, and help stop global warming. The House has already passed comprehensive energy reform legislation (the American Clean Energy and Security Act) that includes the "Green Bank" initiative championed by Congressman Van Hollen. The Green Bank will provide financing to accelerate the deployment of clean energy technology across the country. The Senate is now crafting its own energy bill.

**Financial Accountability.** As we get our economy back on track we must adopt measures to prevent another meltdown of the financial system. Congress and the Obama Administration are working on a two-pronged strategy. One proposal would expand and strengthen the regulatory system overseeing the financial industry. The other would provide greater consumer protection against deceptive and

abusive practices. Congressman Van Hollen believes that we must move forward on both these fronts and promote principles of sound lending, transparency, and accountability.

**Fiscal Responsibility.** It is time to put our nation back on the path of fiscal responsibility and end the bad habit of running up our national credit card. Just as families must live within a budget, so must Congress. That is why the House immediately adopted a "Pay-As-You-Go" (PAYGO) rule to restore budget discipline and put our country back on firmer fiscal footing. Congressman Van Hollen cosponsored legislation, which has passed the House, to strengthen the enforcement of this measure by making it a federal statute. This bill is pending in the Senate.

**Education.** In September, the House passed historic legislation to expand educational opportunities by eliminating taxpayer subsidies for banks and investing the savings in education and deficit reduction. The plan expands the Direct Loan program for college students and increases the maximum Pell Grant scholarship. It also invests in early childhood education with the creation of an Early Learning Challenge Fund, which will train early educators and prepare young children for academic success. Finally, the House bill provides funding for school modernization projects to give our children safe, clean, and healthy places to learn. This legislation is currently under consideration in the Senate.



*Congressman Van Hollen joins local residents at a volunteer project and learns about community improvement efforts.*



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*Chris Van Hollen*  
M.C.  
Prsrt Std

*Congressman Chris Van Hollen speaks with students about what Congress is doing to boost our economy.*

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