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Congressman **Sanford Bishop** *Reports*

2nd Congressional District, Georgia

2429 Rayburn HOB, Washington, DC 20515

Winter 2008

Supporting Our Troops

Overseas Trip Sheds Light on War

Over the Thanksgiving holiday, I had the opportunity to travel to Kuwait, Iraq, Turkey, and Brussels, Belgium with fellow members of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee. Led by Congressman John Murtha, who has led numerous Congressional Delegations (CODELs) into the war zone in Iraq, we visited U.S. Troops and support personnel at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait on Thanksgiving and traveled to Baghdad, Iraq the following day. At Camp Arifjan, I had the privilege of eating Thanksgiving dinner with members of the 1230th Transportation Company based in Bainbridge, Georgia. The men and women

of the 1230th represent the very best of our nation, and it was truly humbling to spend my holiday with them.

The next day in Iraq, the delegation met with U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Ryan Crocker, Commander of Multi-National Forces General David Petraeus, and Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki. Subject matter of all meetings focused on military operations and the success of the additional U.S. forces deployed to the region by the President as a part of the "surge" strategy. General Petraeus seemed extremely capable and I have confidence in his ability to lead our forces. Due in part to
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Dear Friends,

As we move into the second session of the 110th Congress, I have hope for the American people. Last November, Americans asked for change from their government. And, now, our seniors, our children, and our men and women in uniform are represented by a Congress accountable to them and not special interests. Now, we are working against the cuts to education, health care and housing programs that paid for tax cuts for corporations and the wealthiest of Americans during the Republican-led Congress.

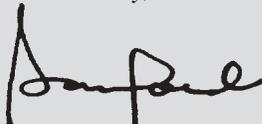
Since 2003, we have been engaged in a costly and deadly war – a war where the mission has not always been clear. While Congress should work to ensure our men and women in uniform have every dollar, dime, nickel and penny they need to be safe and successful in their mission, we must not neglect our priorities at home.

The 110th Congress has made significant progress toward this end. We are working to improve our nation's failing health care system, to ensure a safe and affordable domestic food supply, to protect our borders, to solve our energy crisis, and to stop the fiscal recklessness that has threatened to compromise our children's future.

This edition of the newsletter that we periodically prepare for the residents of Georgia's Second Congressional District provides a brief overview of issues faced in 2007 and that will prove challenging in the year ahead.

I feel that it is important that you be kept informed of what we are working on in Washington, D.C., but it is even more important for me to hear your views on the issues that matter to you. I look forward to hearing from you (see addresses and telephone numbers on page 4) and seeing you in person throughout the Second District.

Sincerely,



Sanford Bishop
Member of Congress



Congressman Bishop, during the CODEL, discussed military operations with members of the Bainbridge, Georgia-based 1230th Transportation Company, Army National Guard: from left, Pfc. Windell R. Nasworthy of Columbus, Spc. Alex Stembridge of Macon, Congressman Bishop, Lt. Col. Darryl L. Cummings of Jonesboro, Staff Sgt. Robert Grieco of Unadilla, and Sgt. Aliya Diaad of Augusta.

No Farm Bill Yet

Farm Bill Heads to Conference

The Farm, Nutrition, and Bioenergy Act of 2007 is slowly working its way through the legislative process. The House passed the Farm bill on July 27 of last year and it moved to the Senate, where it passed the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry on October 25th. Hoping to make the Farm bill a vehicle for other legislation, including immigration reform, more than 200 controversial amendments unrelated to agricultural policy were added to the bill, further impeding progress on the overall measure. On December 7, a compromise was reached, with both sides of the aisle agreeing to just 20 amendments each. Floor deliberations on the

(Continued on page 4)

Strengthening Our Economy

Addressing the Mortgage Crisis

Part of the proverbial "American Dream" is a house to call home and becoming a "homeowner." Many in this country have strived to fulfill that dream and have turned to the subprime market to assist them in their home-ownership endeavor.

The burgeoning rate of foreclosures in the country and in southwest Georgia has gained the attention of lawmakers in DC, including myself, who are equally concerned about the mortgage crisis. In response to the desperate pleas of constituents, the 110th Congress passed the Mortgage Reform and Anti-Predatory Lending Act of 2007. This bill created enhanced consumer protections to help

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Federal Money At Work for the Second District

AGRICULTURE - \$4,974,783

- \$496,677-Albany—Peanut Institute, research to prevent the onset of chronic diseases and overweight children.
- \$662,000-Albany State University—Agriculture water policy research.
- \$460,013-Byron-Georgia Pecan Growers Assn., the development of better adapted pecan varieties and rootstocks.
- \$131,799-Dawson—Peanut Lab, Peanut research.
- \$603,409-UGA —Alternative methods of controlling pecan scab disease
- \$74,250-Dawson—Peanut Lab, Peanut production research.
- \$323,000-Albany— Ga. Environmental Training and Ed. Authority, provide rural wastewater training to local municipalities.
- \$286,000-National Wild Turkey Federation —Operation Oak Program seeks the restoration of native hardwoods.
- \$191,000-UGA—Research for Phytophthora capsici.
- \$371,000-UGA—Cotton Insect Management and Fiber Quality.
- \$371,000-Peanut Lab—Water use efficiency and quality enhancement.
- \$704,635-Dawson—Enhancing long-term sustainability of irrigated agricultural production and net returns.

DEFENSE- \$14,000,000

- \$6,000,000-Fort Benning— Soldier Center at Patriot Park.
- \$2,800,000-Albany— Automatic Identification and Data Capture Solution Center at the Marine Corps Logistics Center
- \$1,600,000-Albany— Marine Corps Enterprise Information Technology Services
- \$1,200,000-Albany— Logistics Analysis and Optimization Center - to be located at MarineCorps Logistics Center (MCLB).
- \$800,000-Fort Benning—Vegetation management and animal control project.
- \$1,600,000-Albany— Phoebe Putney Hospital Technical Regional Center of Excellence for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

ENERGY AND WATER - \$364,000

- \$364,000-City of Albany— Floodplain mapping.

INTERIOR - \$492,000

- \$492,200-City of Vienna— Wastewater improvement project.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS - \$234,480,000

Fort Benning—

- \$3,700,000-Child Development Center
- \$5,800,000-Modified Record Fire Range
- \$51,000,000-Reception Station (Phase I)
- \$56,000,000-Simulation Training Facility
- \$73,000,000-Trainee Barracks Complex
- \$21,000,000-Special Operations Forces Battalion building
- \$5,000,000-Special Operations Forces Battalion Headquarters
- \$9,000,000-Special Operations Forces Tactical Equipment Shop

MCLB- Albany—

- \$9,980,000-Combat Vehicle Warehouse.

TRANSPORTATION/ HUD - \$1,750,000

- \$750,000-Donalsonville— Address drainage problems at US 84 and SR 39/91.
- \$750,000-Columbus— Widening of SR 982 between 7th and Hilton Aves.
- \$250,000-Albany— SOWEGA Council on Aging, Senior Center

HOMELAND SECURITY - \$600,000

- \$300,000-City of Albany— FEMA Predisaster mitigation
- \$300,000-Sumter County— FEMA Predisaster mitigation



Congressman Bishop and General Jerry White tour the site of the National Infantry Museum and Soldier Center at Fort Benning. The Soldier Center will receive \$6,000,000 in federal funding during 2008.

A Message About 2008 Appropriations

Since my appointment to the House Appropriations Committee in 2003, I have worked diligently to obtain federal support for worthy projects in the Second Congressional District. This year, I joined the Defense and Agriculture subcommittees, and remained on the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs subcommittee of Appropriations. These important subcommittees provide an even better position from which to address the issues facing the Second Congressional District.

This year's Appropriations process has not been a smooth one. The President and some Congressional Republicans in both the House and Senate refused to support most of the Democrat-majority's Appropriations bills. Their maneuvering caused significant cuts in many agencies, but eventually, both the minority and majority leadership of the House and Senate came to agreement with the White House on an Omnibus appropriations bill, passed by the House on December 17th. The spending package provides funding for the entire Federal government, except the Defense Department, whose funding was approved earlier this year.

Given the President's and the minority's refusals to compromise, this legislation is the best we can do for the American people this year. Still, the final Omnibus bill manages to restore some of the President's proposed cuts to health, education, rural programs, first responders and crime prevention.

It is ironic that, as the President pushes us over \$500 billion spent in the war abroad, he cries for fiscal responsibility at home. And, I am not about to back down from my pledge to send our troops every dollar, dime, nickel, and penny they need. But as this war drags on toward its 5th anniversary, the President must let Congress take care of business at home.

The fate of Second District projects was a top concern during this year's budget battle, as their funding hinged on the President's willingness to engage in good-faith negotiations. The following is a list of second district projects which were approved in the FY 2008 Appropriations process. I am proud to support these projects.

SCIENCE, COMMERCE, JUSTICE - \$1,268,500

- \$235,000-Columbus— Liberty Theatre, After school program for at risk children
- \$94,000-City of Lumpkin— After school program for at risk children
- \$117,500-Muscogee County Marshal's Office—The Junior Marshall Program
- \$94,000-Columbus— Building Toward Wellness Community Coalition, After School/ summer tutorial program
- \$117,500-Reynolds-Amar Civic Club— Tutoring and after school activities for high school students in Taylor and surrounding counties.
- \$70,500-City of Colquitt — Police Department, 24-hour monitoring system
- \$23,500-Dawson— Public Safety Department, Children Interested In Change
- \$70,500-Columbus— Urban League at risk youth program.
- \$70,500-Columbus— Twin Cedars, after-school program
- \$47,000-Dawson— Barnes Comm. Dev. Ctr., after -school Program
- \$47,000-Brooks County — After school recreational program.
- \$47,000-Americus— Life Transformation Ministry, at-risk youth
- \$47,000-Bainbridge— Communities in School, Decatur County
- \$47,000-Columbus— A.J. McClung YMCA, at-risk youth
- \$141,000-Dooly County — Family Resource Center

LABOR/ HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES/ EDUCATION - \$898,000

- \$292,000-Southwest Georgia— Biomedical/ Biotechnology Collaboration between Darton College, Albany State and Albany Technical College
- \$242,000-Albany State/Darton College— Minority male ed.
- \$170,000-Fort Valley State University— Teacher training
- \$97,000-Miller County Dev. Authority— Youth program

**Find out about the
FY 2009
Appropriations
process:**

<http://bishop.house.gov>

BRAC Moves Along

\$439 Million for Fort Benning

This year's FY 2008 Military Construction appropriations bill includes \$439 million for Fort Benning, the largest single-year investment in construction and improvements at the military base. As a member of the Military Construction/VA Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee, I was able to help craft the bill, and believe this is great news not just for Fort Benning, but for the thousands of soldiers living on-base, and for the thousands moving to the Columbus area in the coming months. It is our duty to maintain the utmost in facilities and training and to ensure a quality living environment for

our men and women in uniform.

This funding will improve facilities on-base, including housing for families, child care facilities, special operations centers, and health clinics. Also, the bill provides an excellent opportunity for expanded employment opportunities in construction, skilled trades, and other related industries in Columbus. I'm looking forward to working with Fort Benning and our civic leaders to ensure that the federal government's investment optimizes employment and investment opportunities in Columbus and the surrounding community.

Fort Benning

Soldier Center Moves Ahead

I am proud to report that construction of the museum which will honor our nation's venerable infantry moved closer to fruition this year as \$6,000,000 was guaranteed for the project through the 2008 Defense Appropriations bill. As a member of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, I was able to help gain this funding.

The Fort Benning Soldier Center at Patriot Park, which is contributing 400 jobs as a part of an overall annual economic impact of \$38 million for the Columbus/ Fort Benning region, will be a source

of pride for the legendary warriors who have protected our nation for 230 years.

The site, aptly located at the "Home of the Infantry" – Fort Benning – will not only commemorate the history of the infantry, but will serve as an active part of soldier training and host ceremonial graduations for the 30,000 soldiers who join the ranks of the infantry at Fort Benning each year.

Healthcare for Our Troops PTSD Center Coming to Albany

In 2006, instructions to expand capabilities for Phoebe Putney Hospital to treat sufferers of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) were included in the FY06 Defense Appropriations bill. PTSD is a debilitating illness affecting individuals who have experienced or witnessed life-threatening events such as military combat, natural disasters, serious accidents, and assaults.

This year, the FY08 Defense Appropriations bill included \$1.6 million to help construct a "Regional Center of Excellence" at Phoebe Putney, to understand the existing methods of training, diagnosis, treatment, and technological advances to define the most promising and effective treatment strategies for PTSD. It is estimated that one in five brave men and women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan will at some point suffer the effects of PTSD, which can range from nightmares and flashbacks to other health conditions. This number may be even greater as many fail to report symptoms or seek help because of the stigma that is traditionally associated with mental illness.

Helping Our Veterans

Historic Increase for the VA

This year's Omnibus Appropriations bill (for details, see facing page) includes \$43.1 billion for the Department of Veterans Affairs, \$6.6 billion above FY 2007 and the largest single increase in the 77-year history of the Veterans Administration. This is a deserved increase for the VA, and I am hopeful it will provide support where it is most needed - for improving veterans medical care, ending the unreasonably long waits in claims processing, and making facility improvements in VA Clinics and hospitals.

Our nation's nearly 400,000 veterans kept their promises to keep America safe and secure. We must not fail in keeping our promises to them. This legislation is a step toward that goal.

Moving America Forward Minimum Wage Increases

As the cost of living steadily rises across the country, Congress voted this year to increase the federal minimum wage. This increase is the first in a decade. The pay raise to \$7.25 per hour over a two-year period comes at a critical time - prices at the pump are reaching record levels, health care costs prevent families from receiving necessary treatments, and many homeowners face foreclosure.

I was a proud supporter of this legislation. Raising the minimum wage is not just about economics; it is about supporting American families and protecting core American values.



Congressman Bishop with Spc. Dontavius McGee of Pelham. Spc. McGee, who was injured while serving in Iraq, went on a Capitol tour with the Congressman while he recovered from his injuries at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

Fighting For Our Children President Vetoes SCHIP Bill

This year's debate over children's health care represents a moral crisis in our country. Why should there be such a struggle to provide health care to the youngest and most vulnerable of our citizens? Several times over the past year the Democrat-led House and Senate have voted to provide health care to 10 million children - including 470,000 Georgia children- only to see the legislation vetoed by the President.

We have made several good faith efforts to compromise with the President and each time, the legislation has met with a swift stroke from the Presidential veto pen. I am disappointed in the President's disregard for the needs of our children, and promise to continue fighting for this legislation.

Supporting the Mission

Weapons Facility Coming to MCLB

This year a key project in the Defense Appropriations bill provided \$9,980,000 to the Marine Corps Logistics Base (MCLB) in Albany to construct a secure weapons and vehicle storage facility. Our current mission requires that MCLB Albany provide maintenance, preservation, and storage for Ground Weapons Systems and Light Armored Vehicles. The new facility will provide state of the art protection for long-term storage controlled humidity protection and reduce supply storage costs.

With ongoing conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, we must do our best to ensure our forces are mission- ready, including maintaining all weapons, vehicles, and equipment. Toward that end, I proudly supported this project.

Recovering From Disaster

Bringing Sumter Hospital Back

By now, this horrific story is known all too well. On March 1, 2007, at 9:26 p.m., the City of Americus and surrounding communities were struck by one of the most destructive tornadoes to ever hit southwest Georgia. The tornado left many victims in its wake, including Sumter Regional Hospital, which was essentially destroyed.

Thanks to the immediate action of physicians, nurses and staff in moving all of the patients into interior hallways where they rode out the storm, no one in the hospital was killed.

Ten months later, Sumter Regional Hospital is well on its way to recovery. Not only are plans for the construction of a new facility moving forward, but by working in a bipartisan fashion, Georgia members in Congress were able to help secure approval of a special exemption from the Department of Health and Human Services to allow the Hospital to provide incentives to key medical personnel to remain in the Americus community until the hospital's operations are back to full capacity. The new year promises much hope for this once-devastated community, and I promise to continue to do my dead-level best to help.



Congressman Bishop, President Bush, and other Sumter County leaders look over a map outlining the area of destruction created by the tornadoes which ripped through Southwest Georgia on March 1, 2007.

GA Students Come to D.C.

Georgia students continue to play an important role not only in my offices in Washington, Columbus, Albany, and Thomasville, but within the U.S. Congress.

The Congressional Page Program brings approximately 100 high schoolers from across the county to work and study in the nation's capitol. Their service as messengers on the floor of the House of Representatives, as well as within the entire House complex, is invaluable to the daily operations of Congress. This year Congress instituted a Page Board to ensure the lasting integrity of the 150-year old program. Also, this past spring, we were proud to have Ramon Williams, currently a senior at Spencer High School in Columbus, represent the Second Congressional District as a Congressional page.

I also have been fortunate to have some of Southwest Georgia's best and brightest work in my office as interns. Often taking on the responsibilities of full-time staff, these students learn the ins and outs of the legislative process, casework, and field operations. Interns are generally college juniors and seniors with an interest in government or public service. For information on becoming an intern, please visit <http://bishop.house.gov> or call one of the offices listed at the bottom of the page.

Trip

(Continued from page one)

his leadership, violence has subsided in recent months and it is crucial the Prime Minister use this window of opportunity to make the political progress necessary to ensure the continued stability of the fledgling nation. A key component is passing the hydrocarbon law to create a revenue sharing plan among the various ethnic groups and regions. If the Prime Minister can lead his government to action on the oil revenue sharing law, get agreement on power sharing between the national government and the provinces, provide for potable water and electricity, and a trained Iraqi security force, it could justify at least some of the sacrifices made thus far. However, I am not fully confident in his ability to inspire this action in his parliament, whose disorganized and divisive nature has struggled to enact the simplest of laws thus far.

Following Iraq, the delegation continued to Turkey, where we met with newly elected President Gül and discussed U.S.- Turkish relations and regional issues. In Brussels, Belgium we met with NATO officials and further discussed U.S. foreign relations issues, including the war.



Congressman Bishop with Bo Faircloth, of Camilla. Bo is a UGA student who interned in the Washington, D.C. office this past summer.

Student Artist Honored

Mickey Beters of Thomasville's Brookwood School was the Second Congressional District's 2007 winner of the Congressional Art Competition. Her winning entry, entitled "An Inconvenient Truth," is on display in the U.S. Capitol, along with the winning entries from other Congressional districts. In an effort to encourage young people to develop their artistic talents, the annual contest is open to all Second District students.

Mortgage crisis

(Continued from page one)

people facing foreclosure. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, this legislation has established a minimum standard for borrowers to help ensure that they can repay a loan and avoid the risks of foreclosure.

As a supporter of this bill, I believe this legislation is a strong start to recovering from the mortgage crisis and restrengthening the housing market. Congress is diligently working to combat predatory lenders to alleviate the mortgage predicament many are facing. I will continue to monitor the progress of Congress' efforts in addressing this problem and will do what is necessary to support those in pursuit of the American Dream.

Law Makes College More Affordable

In this country, college students are graduating more in debt than in the past. Our students should be able to attend school to do one thing – learn – without constantly worrying how they will pay off their education. This year, the House approved the single largest investment in college financial aid since the 1944 GI Bill, helping millions of students and families pay for college – and doing so at no new cost to U.S. taxpayers. The new law boosts college financial aid by about \$18 billion over the next five years and pays for itself by reducing excessive federal subsidies paid to lenders in the college loan industry by \$19 billion.

Under the bill, the maximum value of the Pell Grant scholarship increases by \$500 over the next five years. Combined with other scholarship increases passed or proposed by Congress this year, the maximum Pell Grant will reach \$4,900 in 2008 and \$5,200 in 2011, up from \$4,050 in 2006, thus restoring the Pell's purchasing power. About 6 million low- and moderate-income students would benefit from this increase.

The legislation also cuts in half interest rates on need-based student loans. Over the next five years, interest rates will drop incrementally from 6.8 percent to 3.4 percent. Hopefully, by relieving some of the burden imposed by student loans, students will concentrate more on their studies and embark on successful post-college careers.

Farm bill

(Continued from page one)

Farm bill and the amendments began on December 11, with Senate passage on December 14.

Now, the House and Senate must work to reconcile differences between the two bills. Both chambers will have to pass the reconciled bill, called a conference report, before it is sent to the President, who has threatened to veto the legislation. Throughout the process, I pledge to communicate the priorities of our farmers to the conferees. This includes the Peanut Environmental Resource Stewardship (PERS) program I led the charge to secure in the House-passed bill. Should the President veto the legislation, I will do everything possible to urge my colleagues in Congress to support a veto override.

In the meantime, we are planning to enact a short-term solution to continue most Farm bill programs through March 15, 2008. The legislation will not extend the 2002 commodity support programs to the 2008 crop year. Those provisions will be included in the new Farm bill.

Need Help?

Working for the People of Georgia's Second Congressional District

My most important job as a Member of Congress is serving Second District constituents. Whether we are helping our young people start their military career at one of the U.S. Service Academies, making plans for your family to tour the U.S. Capitol or working with the Social Security Administration to locate your lost Social Security check, my staff members and I are always available to assist you.

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