

I appreciated the chance to hear the thoughts, ideas, and concerns of Central New Jerseyans when hundreds joined me for a telephone town hall meeting on Tuesday evening. A recording of our conversation is now [available online](#).

Among the questions raised: Leonard in Somerset asked about the legal authority behind the President's decision to defer deportation actions against certain undocumented immigrants.

As you may have heard, the President's action applies only to immigrants who were brought to the United States as children and who are now productive and law-abiding residents: those who have, for instance, graduated from school or been honorably discharged from the U.S. military.

As I expressed on the call, the executive branch has the authority to determine America's law enforcement priorities, and I believe that it is sensible to focus our limited resources where they can do the most good: securing our borders and deporting violent offenders. But the President's actions are only a stopgap measure. I am a cosponsor of the DREAM Act to make similar provisions permanent and have called for meaningful, comprehensive immigration reform.

Bill in Holmdel asked, "What's going on with student loan interest rates that... we're going to be burdening our kids with?"

I explained that, a couple of years ago, I helped write legislation to greatly reduce the interest rates that students pay for federal college loans. But now there is trouble looming. The House majority has failed to act to prevent student loan interest rates from doubling from 3.4 to 6.8 percent on July 1. If nothing changes, 150,000 New Jersey students will face sharply higher college costs – on average, about \$1,000 in additional loan payments each. The Republican majority must act to support students.

Other issues raised [on the call](#) included the Supreme Court's pending ruling on health care reform, the expiration of tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans, and campaign finance reform.

Please stay tuned over the next few months for information on how to join further town halls, both over the phone and in person.

Stopping Flooding Before It Occurs

When Hurricane Irene hit New Jersey last year, it cast more than 10,000 people from their homes and left more than 190,000 utility customers without power. We saw firsthand that the best time to address flooding is before severe weather occurs.

Earlier this month, the House of Representatives took a step toward preventing flooding in New Jersey and across the nation. I offered, and the House passed, an amendment to increase funding for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to provide flood protection. Many Corps projects are already underway across the nation to ensure disaster readiness, including New Jersey projects at Raritan Bay and Sandy Hook Bay in Middletown Township and at the Green Brook Sub-Basin of the Raritan River Basin.

Visit Ready.gov to make sure you are prepared in case of future hurricanes or other natural disasters.

Visiting Washington, D.C.

If you are planning a visit to Washington, D.C., I would be glad to offer assistance in arranging tours of the U.S. Capitol, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, the Pentagon, the Library of Congress, and other popular sites.

Please note that many of these sites offer tours on a first-come, first-served basis, so the sooner you contact me, the greater the likelihood that I can help. When possible, it is best to plan your trip three to six months in advance.

Hearing from You

Friday, 22 June 2012 11:35

For further information or to request a tour, please [visit my website](#) .

Sincerely,

Rush Holt
Member of Congress