

Among my most important roles as your representative is to serve as your advocate in your dealings with the federal government. Over the past year, I have:

- Secured \$40 million for military suicide prevention efforts after an East Brunswick soldier's suicide death exposed gaps in the military health care system.
- Helped a college graduate from South River appeal exorbitant fees that a contractor was charging to service his federal student loans.
- Helped a Kendall Park family resolve immigration problems after a paperwork error almost prevented their adoption of a child from overseas.
- Helped a Plainsboro man expedite his passport application in time for a long-planned family trip.

These are only a few of the thousands of Central New Jerseyans whom I am able to help directly each year. If you have encountered problems in your dealings with any federal agency, please let me know so I can help. You can reach me at 1-87-RUSH-HOLT (1-877-874-4658) or by visiting holt.house.gov/contact .

Tragedy in Colorado

As we watch the news from Colorado with horror and sympathy for the families, we should remember that each day more than 80 Americans are killed by gunfire, unnecessary tragedies. Arguments that gun safety legislation won't help the situation seem to me illogical or blindly ideological.

Ensuring the Health of Pensions

In the U.S. House Committee on Education and the Workforce last month, we held a hearing about the health of multi-employer pension funds – typically plans that are maintained by several employers and a labor union, such as those representing truckers or carpenters who work for various employers. These funds face many challenges today. According to IRS data,

the proportion of multiemployer plans facing significant funding shortfalls rose from 23 percent in 2008 to 68 percent in 2009. Demographic trends also pose a threat: beneficiaries of these plans are generally living longer than expected.

Many difficult decisions about contributions and benefits must be made to restore these plans to health. Perhaps the biggest lesson is that we should never fall to the temptation to reduce contributions to pensions when the economy is healthy. A fund that may seem overfunded in good times can become dangerously depleted when the economy heads downhill.

Expanding Health Insurance and Creating Jobs

As the health reform law takes effect over the next few years, tens of millions of Americans will finally gain access to affordable health insurance. Some who question the law have, however, raised a concern: could the requirement that employers provide insurance for their employees and the costs of providing health insurance lead employers to cut employees from their payroll? In other words, might there be a tension between expanding health coverage and creating jobs?

Independent researchers at the Urban Institute recently studied this issue, and they reported good news. In the years after Massachusetts enacted a very similar health reform law, “there was no evidence of a disproportionate loss of employment overall, by type of job, or by type of worker, in Massachusetts under health reform relative to the rest of the nation.”

The researchers concluded, “Although there are differences in the details between the state’s health reform and the [national health reform law], the evidence from Massachusetts suggests that national health reform will not lead to job loss or stymied economic growth.”

Sincerely,

Rush Holt
Member of Congress