



Report To Central New Jersey

APRIL 2005

Dear Friend:

As families and individuals in Central New Jersey are working to meet a range of daily challenges, I am working in Congress and in New Jersey to represent you. In this newsletter, I seek to update you on some of the issues affecting the people of our state and the country.

It is an honor to represent the people of this state – a talented, compassionate, neighborly people. There is much wisdom among the people here, and I am continuously working to apply that wisdom.

The Iraqi elections were conducted successfully, and I believe that now is the time to redouble our efforts to prepare Iraq's new leaders for their transition to a stable, democratic government. Our servicemen and women have been performing well. The circumstances of our occupation, poor pre-war planning, and lack of international support, have placed them in a difficult – almost impossible – position. In addition to my trips to visit our troops in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere overseas, I have been present to welcome home various units of New Jersey Army National Guard, as well as to mourn the loss of those who gave their lives in the service of their country and their compatriots. An enormous burden has been placed on the New Jersey National Guard and their families (60% have been activated overseas this year), and they have risen to meet that challenge admirably. We owe all members of our Armed Forces and their families a deep debt of gratitude. It is my intention to see that they are brought home safely from combat as soon as possible.

As you may know, President Bush recently submitted his budget proposal for 2006. Unfortunately, I believe that it sets the wrong priorities for our state. New Jersey would be hard hit by cuts to AMTRAK, education, veterans' health care, and Medicaid, just to name a few. I believe we can do better, and will continue to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to find sensible, workable solutions to the challenges we face.

I hope you find the information in this newsletter useful. In order to help me understand your concerns, I have enclosed a survey for your comments. Also, I hope you will attend one of my upcoming community meetings, listed on the back page. Please also feel free to contact me by letter (address below), e-mail (through my website at www.holt.house.gov) or phone (toll free at 1-87-RUSH-HOLT).

Thank you, and I look forward to seeing and hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rush Holt".

Rush Holt
Member of Congress

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Please visit my Web site at www.holt.house.gov to learn more about what I am working on, and to sign-up for my occasional e-mail newsletter, the [eGenda](#).

A Sensible Approach to Social Security

www.holt.house.gov

The genius of Social Security is that it is an earned benefit – all Americans pay into the system, and all Americans benefit from it. Social Security is for everyone. Social Security helps seniors live with dignity and independence, and it is a vital support for people with disabilities, spouses of retired or disabled workers, dependent children, and survivors. Since its creation in 1935, Social Security has lifted millions from poverty and never missed a payment.

Despite a concerted effort by politicians to manufacture an imminent crisis, the truth is that without any changes at all, Social Security will pay 100% of benefits until 2052, and 78% of benefits thereafter. What we need is a rational, fact-based discussion about how to make the adjustments needed to make up the 22% shortfall that will occur half a century from now. What we don't need is an attempt to undermine the stability of Social Security's guaranteed monthly benefit.

At recent town meetings, I heard from many people about their concerns with the President's proposal to privatize the core of Social Security. This plan would divert some funds from the Social

Security Trust Fund into private accounts invested in the stock market. Such a plan would needlessly introduce risk and cause a reduction in the monthly benefit. Additionally, even according to its advocates, this proposal would do nothing to shore up long-term solvency because it would require the federal government to borrow \$2 trillion to pay for transition costs. The people who would be forced to pay this debt are the young people who have the most to lose.

Social Security is a compact that ensures our elders, people with disabilities, and survivors are accorded respect and dignity. We need to adjust Social Security responsibly and not allow ideology to replace common sense. As someone who benefited from Social Security – my family received survivors insurance when my father died without a pension or life insurance when I was six – I will continue to fight to ensure that no one undermines the guarantee of Social Security or foists trillions in debt upon future generations. ▸

Rush talks with constituents at a town meeting in Stockton about strengthening Social Security without introducing risk or cutting the monthly benefit through privatization.



Every year, millions of New Jerseyans board Amtrak to get to work, school, or elsewhere. About four times a week, I use Amtrak as part of my own commute. I know how important rail service is to our region's transportation, economy, and quality of life.

Unfortunately, President Bush's budget proposal for 2006 eliminates all funding for Amtrak operations, which totaled \$1.2 billion last year. This plan is a

prescription for chaos for New Jersey, and not only for people who ride AMTRAK. The impact would extend throughout our economy and our communities. Traffic would increase, air quality would worsen, and the costs to our state budget would soar. I am pleased to report that this proposal is opposed by members of our delegation from both parties, and I will fight to ensure that Amtrak is not zeroed out. ▶

DID YOU KNOW...?

According to the U.S. Census, the average commute time for residents of the 12th Congressional District is 33.3 minutes – 30% higher than the national average. Rush Holt supports fully funding Amtrak to decrease traffic, limit pollution, and make commuting more convenient.

Looking After Our Environment

In New Jersey, improving our quality of life requires thoughtful environmental policy. For example, I believe we need to re-dedicate ourselves to preserving open space, limiting pollutants in our air and water, and cleaning up toxic sites efficiently and completely. That is why I continue to fight for the following:

- The School Environment Protection Act (H.R. 110), which would require schools to notify parents before they use pesticides on school grounds.
- The Crossroads of the American Revolution Act (H.R. 87) and The Revolutionary War and War of 1812 Battlefields Preservation Act (H.R. 763), two bills that would preserve New Jersey's land and historic heritage for future generations and would encourage tourism.
- Increased funding for the Superfund program, which pays for the cleanup of our nation's most polluted toxic sites. ▶

Keeping a Promise to Veterans

As the war in Iraq produces more veterans each day, we must keep our promise to those who have "borne the battle." I have recently introduced the "Hire a Veteran Week" resolution, which would encourage employers to fill job vacancies with those who have served in our armed forces. I have also proposed a Congressional internship program (H.R. 1242), through which American veterans would have the chance to have a genuine influence on national policy. I will also continue to press for mandatory funding for veterans' healthcare programs, and to oppose any efforts to charge veterans enrollment fees or increase the cost of medications they need. ▶



Congressional Issue Questionnaire

This is not intended to be a scientific poll. The questions are suggestive in order to elicit your thoughts and opinions. Feel free to write on additional pages.

1. What issues do you feel Congress should focus on in 2005? (Please rank order)

- Economic development and job growth
- Health care
- Homeland security
- Social Security
- Education
- Crime reduction
- Environmental protection
- Foreign policy
- Other _____

2. President Bush has proposed allowing younger workers to divert a portion of their Social Security payroll taxes into personal retirement accounts. Based on what you have heard about this plan, would you say that your opinion is:

- Very positive
- Somewhat positive
- Neutral
- Somewhat negative
- Very negative

3. Congress will soon be debating whether to make the tax cuts of 2001 and 2003 permanent. Which of the following, if made permanent, would help your family or business?

- Estate tax
- Marriage penalty
- Tax deductibility of healthcare premiums
- Tax deductibility of student loans
- Research and Development tax credit
- None of these would help

4. When your family is making budgetary decisions, what concerns you most?

- Rent or mortgage
- Utilities (heat, electric, phone)

- Insurance (car, health, life)
- Health care
- Transportation
- Groceries
- Savings (college, retirement)
- Taxes (income, property)
- Other _____

5. What is the most pressing issue facing you and your town?

- Traffic and congestion
- Quality of schools
- Open space and environmental protection
- Limited jobs and economic opportunity
- Crime
- Terrorism
- Taxes
- Lack of privacy
- Other _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Sign-up with your e-mail address and receive periodic e-mail updates from me on activity in Congress.

E-mail _____

**Please mail this questionnaire to me at:
Representative Rush Holt
50 Washington Road
West Windsor, NJ 08550**

**REP.
RUSH
HOLT**

Town Hall Meetings /Office Hours

www.holt.house.gov

I hope to see you at these upcoming meetings to discuss issues such as Social Security, economic development, hometown security, health care, education, and anything else that may be on your mind.

Saturday, April 23

Town Hall meeting

1:30 p.m.

Spotswood Borough Courtroom
77 Summerhill Road

Monday, April 25

Social Security meeting

1 p.m.

Franklin (Somerset)
Community Center
505 DeMott Lane

Saturday, May 7

North Brunswick

sidewalk office hours

10:30 – 12 p.m.

North Brunswick
Municipal Building
710 Hermann Road

Englishtown office hours

1:30 – 3 p.m.

Englishtown Borough Hall
15 Main Street

To receive more regular updates about my activities in New Jersey and in Washington, D.C., please visit my webpage at www.holt.house.gov and sign up for my e-mail newsletter.

REPRESENTATIVE RUSH HOLT

*As your Congressman,
I am here to help.
Contact me any time.*

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To learn more or to send me an e-mail, go to: www.holt.house.gov

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M.C.
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