



GordonSmith

United States Senator, Oregon * * * * *

› About Senator Smith

› How Can We Help?

› Oregon Information

› Legislative Resources

› Press Room

› Student Resources

› Contact Me

An Update From Senator Smith

October 2007

In this E-mail...

[Taking Care of Older Veterans](#)

[Stopping a middle-class tax hike](#)

[Taxing your internet access?](#)

[The Right Way for D.C to Vote](#)

[Safe Refuge Needed for Iraqi-Christians](#)

[Stopping a Nuclear Iran](#)

[Helping Farmers Buy New Equipment](#)

Taking Care of Older Veterans

Access to quality mental and physical health care for older veterans was the focus of a recent Senate Aging Committee hearing that I chaired. We reviewed our aging veterans' health care needs and whether all veterans receive timely access to high quality services.

While much of the focus has been centered on the state of health care for our returning vets, we cannot forget those who served in the past. I am concerned by deficiencies in the Veterans health care systems that obstruct access to physical and mental health care.



Senator Smith and former Senator Bob Dole discussing veteran's health care issues

Former Senator Bob Dole (R-KS) testified from his perspective as a World

War II veteran as well as his work as a co-chair of the President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors. In response to the hearings, I am working on new legislation that improves access to mental health care for returning and older veterans.

The Only Alternative to the AMT is Elimination



[Click](#)

[to watch video](#)

Warning: Your Taxes are going up!

A tax moratorium that has kept your internet bill tax free since 1998 is set to expire in less than a month. If this happens new fees and taxes can be levied on your internet service. Soon the bill you receive for your Internet service could include the pages of fees and taxes you currently get with your phone, cable or satellite bill.

I continue to believe that taxes slow economic growth and discourage innovation. That is why I am working in Congress, together with other Senators on the Republican High Tech Task Force, to get the current moratorium on Internet taxes extended, forever.

A permanent ban just makes sense. People use the Internet to send E-mail, purchase goods and services, and conduct research. We wouldn't allow government to tax people for simply walking into a post office, shopping mall or library - so why would we ever consider allowing them to tax people for simply accessing the Internet?

The Right Way for D.C. to Vote

There is an on-going debate over the voting rights of Washington D.C. Article I, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution states the District's citizens are to have only non-voting representation in the U.S. House of Representatives and no representation in the U.S. Senate, further the Constitution dictates that only a State can receive a vote in Congress.

Recently, the Senate voted on bill that would grant Washington D.C. a vote with full privileges in the House of Representatives. I opposed this effort and the bill failed on 57-42 vote. As I see it, there are only two ways to decide if D.C. should have a vote. Either through the state of Maryland by statute or through a Constitutional amendment. Either effort is far more appropriate than Congress acting on its own.

Safe Refuge Needed for Iraqi-Christians

Terrorists and extremists are targeting innocent Iraqi civilians who are helping our troops - as a result millions of Iraqis are fleeing. The UN estimates that more than two million have left Iraq and more than two million have left their homes. Human-rights organizations estimate that Christians, who constitute less than three percent of Iraq's population, make up at least twenty-percent of the refugees. These minorities are often targeted by Islamic extremists with murder, rape or forced conversion to Islam.

No matter what you think of the war in Iraq, I am sure you agree that we have a moral and humanitarian obligation to help. To that end, I have proposed legislation that would expedite a safe refuge for Iraqis currently in danger. My legislation would also award special immigrant status to Iraqis who have worked for at least one year with U.S. authorities. My hope is this legislation will extend America's historically honorable record in alleviating the plight of refugees.

Stifling Iran's Nuclear Ambition

There is a robust coalition of senators - sixty eight strong - supporting the Iran Counter-Proliferation Act. I introduced the legislation in January to stifle Iran's nuclear ambitions. A nuclear capable Iran is a threat to the United States and our allies.

This bill would impose additional economic sanctions and designate Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organization. A terrorist designation will allow the U.S. State Department and U.S. Treasury Department to freeze financial assets that fund attacks on U.S. troops in Iraq. The new sanctions would also prohibit Iranian exports to the United States and freeze the assets of senior Iranian diplomats and government officials.

Reforming the Tax Code to Help Farmers

The right equipment can have a big impact on whether a crop turns a profit. The problem is new farm equipment is expensive and the federal tax code isn't helping. Seven year depreciation periods for expensing farm equipment leave many farmers financially strapped - especially when the average life span is five years.

I am working with Kentucky Senator Jim Bunning to shorten the tax depreciation period on farm equipment from seven to five years. A shorter period will encourage reinvestment in new equipment that will increase productivity and farm revenue. This new provision is part of an agriculture tax relief package that was recently approved by the Senate Finance Committee.