

December 2002



Report to the People

13th Congressional District ♦ New Jersey

Congressman Bob Menendez

CONGRESS CREATES DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

After six months of debate, Democrats and Republicans joined together as patriots to establish a new Department of Homeland Security, whose primary mission will be to help prevent, and respond, to acts of terrorism on our soil.

On November 25, 2002, the president signed into law H.R. 5005, the "Homeland Security Act of 2002." The Act restructures and seeks to strengthen the executive branch of the Federal Government to better meet the threat to our homeland posed by terrorism.

This Act includes an amendment that I cosponsored to guarantee that agencies of the Federal Government coordinate and share critical information among themselves and with state and local authorities. The minute that this Department goes on-line, the new Secretary should have, in real-time, all of the intelligence and law enforcement information that he needs. While prompt and effective implementation are up to the Administration, Congress will be watching closely.

This bill also includes several key provisions that I was glad to draft or cosponsor, including:

- ◆ Preserving vital non-security missions of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Coast Guard and others;
- ◆ Requiring the Commandant of the Coast Guard to report directly to the Secretary;
- ◆ Establishing a new Office of State and Local Coordination; and
- ◆ Establishing an Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties.

Another significant change in the bill focuses on explosive detection systems in airports. Back in July, the bill merely required airports to submit a plan for explosion detection technology installation but had irre-

sponsibly and dangerously not required them to actually deploy the detection systems. This bill requires

that front line. We must provide our first responders the resources, training and guidance they need to pro-

Dear Friends,

I would like to extend my warmest wishes to you and your loved ones for the new year, and look forward to continuing my work for you here at home and as your Representative in the United States Congress.

I am honored to write to you as the newly-elected Chairman of the House Democratic Caucus, a position that will provide you, my constituents, with even more influence in Washington, DC.

As we enter into the 108th Congress, my priorities, and those of all Americans, are to: remember the victims and their families of September 11th, by bringing to justice those who so cruelly attacked our nation; right the wrongs of the special interests who are more concerned with tax cuts for the wealthy, than tax breaks for working families; right the wrongs of a Party -- and its President -- that intends to relax environmental protections instead of strengthening them; create jobs for our jobless, homes for the homeless; and bring back fiscal discipline, so that our elderly will have a safety net in retirement and not have to choose between putting food on the table or buying expensive prescription drugs.

And even though we Democrats fell short in our attempt to regain the majority in Congress, we will continue to fight to ensure that all voices are heard, and that our agenda -- America's agenda -- is implemented. We will not give up.

I am honored and privileged to work on your behalf in Congress, as I fight for your priorities and tackle the many challenges that remain for New Jersey families and the families of the 13th District.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Menendez".

*Bob Menendez
Member of Congress*

deployment a year later. Since the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has stated that 25 airports will not meet the deadline on time, it is essential that the Administration work harder to meet the new deadline and not come forward with more excuses.

Since September 11th, Main Street has become the front line in our war on terror. We must fortify

tect America's communities, just as the Caucus Task Force for Homeland Security, which I was honored to chair, has been calling for since its founding in September of 2001.

Let us get this right for the more than 100 constituents from the 13th Congressional District in northern New Jersey who were killed, and all the other victims of the horrific attacks of September 11th.

MENENDEZ ELECTED CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

Chairmanship makes Menendez highest-ranking Hispanic in Congressional history, and first New Jersey Lawmaker ever to be elected to that position

On November 14, 2003, I was honored to be elected the Chairman of the House Democratic Caucus by my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives. This was a very significant accomplishment for me personally, but it was also a historic event for the State of New Jersey as well as Hispanic Americans -- it is the first time a New Jerseyan or a Hispanic has been elected to such a position, and it is the highest rank a Hispanic has ever held in Congressional history. I will assume the role of Chairman in the 108th Congress, which begins in January of 2003.

The position of Caucus Chairman is the third-ranking elected position in the hierarchy, and follows the

positions of Minority Leader and Minority Whip, which were won by Rep. Nancy Pelosi of California and Rep. Steny Hoyer of Maryland, respectively. The newly-elected Vice Chairman, a position I held for four years, is Rep. James Clyburn of South Carolina.

The Caucus Chairman is responsible for leading the Democratic Party, for developing our party's pro-family agenda, and for implementing our party's priorities. The position also provides me with an opportunity to be a national spokesperson for the needs and priorities of working families in New Jersey and across this country. As the Caucus Chairman, I have the opportunity to be an even stronger

advocate on behalf of these families and the principles we all share.

In addition, this position will enable me to continue my advocacy on behalf of New Jerseyans, especially those living in the 13th Congressional District. It will continue to provide me with a seat at the leadership table that I have enjoyed for the past four years, and strengthen my voice in the decision-making process at the highest levels of government. This will benefit every resident, and I look forward to using my new role to improve the lives of the families throughout my District, to improve our communities and neighborhoods, to create jobs, and to provide for security here at home.

MENENDEZ INTRODUCES PATIENT NAVIGATOR BILL

Provides Health Screenings & Assistance Navigating the Health Care System

The existence of significant health disparities in this nation is undeniable. For years, research has told us that minorities and low-income populations are the least likely to receive the health care they need to live a long, healthy life. We've done a very good job of identi-

fying this problem -- it's high time we do something to solve it.

That's why I'm very excited about the bill I recently introduced, known as the *Patient Navigator, Outreach, and Chronic Disease Prevention Act of 2002*. This bill addresses what I believe are the root causes of health

disparities in minority and underserved communities: lack of access to health care, particularly prevention and early detection, as well as language and cultural barriers to care.

The bottom line is: the only way to stay healthy is to see a doctor when you *are* healthy. Unfortunately, minority and low-income patients are less likely to receive early screening and detection, so their disease is found at a much later stage and they have less chance of survival.

The bill I've introduced will ensure that all Americans, regardless of race, ethnicity, language, income, or geography, will have access to prevention screening and treatment, and that they will have an advocate at their side, helping them navigate through today's complicated health care system. It ensures that people are educated, in a language they understand, about the importance of prevention screening and early detection, and that a doctor will be available to see them. It also ensures that navigators are available to help patients make their way through the health care system -- whether it's translating medical documents, making sense of insurance coverage, making referral appointments, following-up to make sure the patient keeps that appointment, or even accompanying a patient to an appointment.

While the bill did not pass this year, I will reintroduce it again next year and work to get it enacted next Congress.

Veterans History Project

During the 106th Congress, I was honored to support legislation creating the Veterans History Project, an effort to honor our nation's war veterans for their service and to collect their stories and experiences. This legislation directed the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress to collect and preserve audio- and video-taped oral histories, along with documentary materials such as letters, diaries, maps, photographs, and home movies, of America's war veterans and those who served in support of them.

The Veterans History Project covers World War I, World War II, and the Korean, Vietnam, and Persian Gulf wars. It includes all participants in those wars--men and women, civilian and military. It documents the contributions of civilian volunteers, support staff, and war industry workers, as well as the experiences of military personnel from all ranks and all branches of service--the Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, and Navy, as well as the U.S. Coast Guard and Merchant Marine.

I invite veterans, active military personnel, and civilians to become volunteer interviewers. Volunteers are needed to interview those individuals who contributed to the war time effort and made the peace and prosperity we enjoy today possible. Please contact one of my district offices to obtain a Project Kit, which contains all the information and forms you need to participate as a volunteer interviewer. You may also obtain a Project Kit by visiting the Library of Congress' website at <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/vets/about.html>.

ASSISTANCE FOR LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS

As our economy continues to falter, many families are facing very difficult times, and the coming winter weather will make it even more difficult for families to heat their homes. However, assistance is available through the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and the Weatherization Assistance Program. These programs have provided assistance to millions of low-income Americans who otherwise might have lost their heat in winter because they couldn't pay their bills, or continued to pay higher heating bills because their homes were not properly insulated.

LIHEAP helps ease the energy cost burden of low-income households. Eligibility for the program is based on income, and the amount of the benefit is determined by the state. The Weatherization Assistance Program provides low-income households a wide range of weatherization assistance, including caulking and weather stripping of windows and doors, installing storm windows and doors, insulating attics, and efficiency improvements to existing space heating and water heating systems.

How You Can Get Help

The LIHEAP and Weatherization Assistance programs are available to eligible low-income families across the country. To qualify in New Jersey, a family must be within the following income guidelines:

| Household Size | Maximum Gross Monthly Income |
|----------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | \$1,292 |
| 2 | \$1,741 |
| 3 | \$2,190 |
| 4 | \$2,640 |
| 5 | \$3,089 |
| 6 | \$3,538 |
| 7 | \$3,987 |
| 8 | \$4,436 |
| 9 | \$4,885 |
| 10 | \$5,335 |
| 11 | \$5,774 |
| 12 | \$5,892 |

To determine eligibility for household sizes greater than 12, add \$118 for each additional member.

To apply or to get more information, contact:

Essex County

La Casa De Don Pedro
317 Roseville Avenue
Newark, NJ 07107
973-485-0701 (Weatherization Program)
973-485-0796 (Home Energy Assistance)

Hudson County

Bayonne Economic Opportunity Foundation
555 Kennedy Boulevard
Bayonne, NJ 07002
201-437-7222

Puertorriquenos Asociados for Community Organization (PACO)

389 Monmouth Street
Jersey City, NJ 07302
201-864-3774 (Weatherization Program)
201-217-0583 (Home Energy Assistance)

3700 Bergenline Avenue
Union City, NJ 07087
201-864-3774 (Weatherization Program)
201-217-0583 (Home Energy Assistance)

Middlesex County

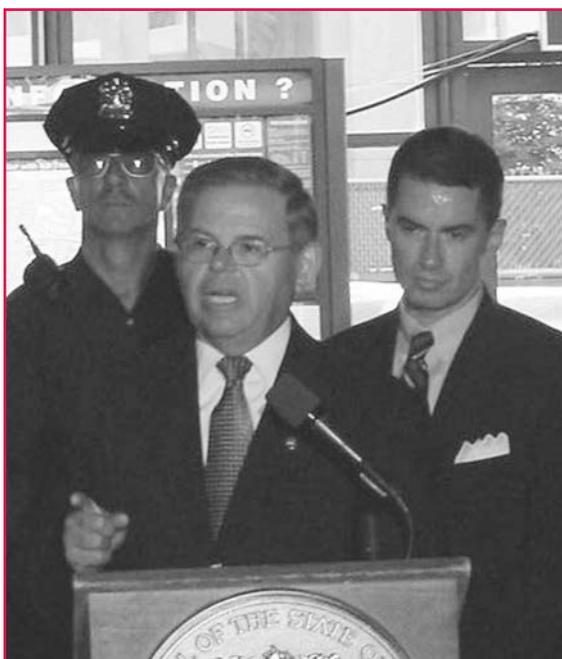
Puerto Rican Action Board
22 Joyce Kilmer Avenue
New Brunswick, NJ 08903-0240
732-828-4510 (Weatherization Program)
732-828-4541 (Home Energy Assistance)

Union County

PROCEED
1126 Dickinson Street
Elizabeth, NJ 07201
908-351-7727

Urban League of Union County

288 North Broad Street
Elizabeth, NJ 07207
908-351-7200



Visit Congressman
Menendez
on the Internet:

Web site: Menendez.house.gov

September 8, 2002—Congressman Menendez joined New Jersey Governor James. E. McGreevey to announce \$206 million from the federal government to improve and restore service at transportation facilities impacted by the September 11th attacks, including the Exchange Place PATH station.

CONGRESS CLOSES WITHOUT ADDRESSING NEEDS OF AMERICAN FAMILIES

With a few notable exceptions, this Congress will go down in the history books as one that failed to work together to address the needs of American families.

As America continues to suffer from a sluggish economy, the Republican majority maintains that making tax cuts (whose benefits will not be felt for many years to come) permanent is the only way to stimulate an economy that is struggling now. One way that they could have immediately helped Americans was to pass a clean extension of unemployment benefits providing an additional thirteen weeks of assistance. The current extension expires on Dec. 28th, and the failure to extend these benefits means that approximately 800,000 laid-off workers will lose their assistance three days after Christmas.

One of the most basic functions of Congress is passing the thirteen appropriation bills that keep the government operating. To date, Congress has only passed bills funding military construction and defense. The rest of the government limps along on continuing resolutions that provide no real direction and limit funding to last year's levels. This failure means

that veterans will continue to wait up to six months to get an appointment at a veterans hospital. It means that education will be shorted \$4 billion, that the urgent needs of first responders at the state and local levels will be shorted \$3.5 billion, and that New Jersey could lose over \$80 million in highway funding and almost 4,000 livable wage jobs.

The House Leadership had an opportunity to work in a bipartisan manner when it came to making health care and prescription drugs affordable, as well as protecting pensions. This year, Americans saw health care spending rise 7% (the largest jump since 1993) and prescription drug prices go up 10%. Americans also felt the impact of the spectacular failure of Enron and other large employers. Instead of working in a bipartisan manner to address these needs, this Republican controlled Congress passed bills designed to fail.

We were able to work together on some issues of great importance. As the Chairman of the Democratic Task Force on Homeland Security and a Member of the Select Committee on Homeland Security, I was pleased to be able to work with my colleagues to craft a bill that, on the

whole, addresses the security needs of our nation. Next Congress, I plan to use my position as Chairman of the Democratic Caucus to continue to fight for American families and ensure that Congress addresses their needs, not just the needs of the special interests.

Congressman Bob Menendez

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July 29, 2002—Congressman Menendez joined US Senator Jon Corzine in a tour of Coast Guard port security activities, led by Coast Guard Captain Craig E. Bone. The Congressman and Senator toured the coast guard Operations Center and Vessel Traffic Control Center, and observed boarding operations for international container vessels, and other Coast Guard operations currently used to protect the seaboard from terrorist attack.

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Official Business



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This mailing was prepared, published, and mailed at taxpayer expense.