

## YOUR ISSUES YOUR AGENDA • SPRING 2001

**Tax Relief Will Spur The Nation's Ailing Economy**

**CONGRESSMAN FLETCHER SUPPORTS TAX RELIEF FOR AMERICA**

For most of the 1990's, the United States experienced an economic boom that increased prosperity and national surplus. Unfortunately, the economy has shifted, but it is not too late to regain positive economic momentum and ensure our future good fortune. As did President Kennedy and President Reagan before him, President Bush has introduced a responsible tax-relief plan that will fortify the economy and bring much-needed relief to families in Kentucky.

Congressman Fletcher has already voted to reduce marginal rates across the board and will work for the additional parts of the President's plan. He believes that tax relief will not only ensure the future growth of the American economy, but will reduce the inequities of the current tax code.

**MARGINAL INCOME TAX RATE CUTS** - Simplifies the five current tax rates of 15, 28, 31, 36, and 39.6 percent by replacing them with four reduced rates of 10, 15, 25, and 33 percent. Cuts in marginal rates will put real money in Kentuckians' pockets. It will allow families to buy a new washer or dryer, afford a summer vacation or save for a rainy day.

**INCREASED CHILD TAX CREDIT** Doubles the child tax credit to \$1,000 per child and protects the credit from the Alternative Minimum Tax.

**REDUCED MARRIAGE PENALTY** - Allows up to a \$3,000 deduction to offset the tax code penalty against married couples. Marriage between two people should be encouraged, not discouraged by unnecessary penalties.

**Funding America's Priorities**  
**BUDGET BLUEPRINT PRESERVES SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE**

The budget blueprint passed by the House Budget Committee in March builds on Congress' successes of the last six years. The proposals and reform initiatives continue to usher in a new era of fiscal responsibility in spending for America.

**FIFTH STRAIGHT BALANCED BUDGET**

The budget for fiscal year 2002 represents the fifth year in a row the nation has had a balanced budget. The federal government balanced its books for the first time in three decades in 1998.

**MORE TAX RELIEF**

This year's budget returns \$1.6 trillion of the projected tax overcharge to the taxpayers who created it. This is only after paying for the nation's priorities and paying down the national debt. It removes 6 million low-income families from the federal income tax rolls while cutting marginal rates for every American taxpayer.

**EDUCATION**

President Bush's plan, No Child Left Behind, introduced in Congress in March, works to return power and resources to the people who know the names of local students. The budget triples resources for reading programs and provides \$2.6 billion for states to improve teacher quality.

**PROTECTING SOCIAL SECURITY**

The continuous raid on the Social Security Trust fund ended in 1998. Earlier this year, the House voted to place the \$2.6 trillion Social Security surplus off-limits for other Washington spending.

**DEATH TAX ELIMINATION**

- Ensures that families will not have to sell the farm or liquidate the business to pay tax rates as high as 60%. It's wrong to force a family to visit the tax collector and undertaker on the same day.

**PROMOTION OF CHARITABLE GIVING**

- Allows every taxpayer to deduct charitable

donations, regardless of whether or not they itemize their tax returns.

These steps will stimulate the economy and provide much needed fairness to the American tax code. Through these reasonable steps, Kentuckians will have more money in their pockets to spend as they see fit. People, not the government, know best how to spend their own money. Some people in Washington believe that it will "cost" too much to give a tax cut to working Americans, but the tax cut, in fact, is a tax overcharge and costs families too much.

Congressman Fletcher will continue to support cutting taxes and sending Central Kentuckians' money back to them.



Rep. Fletcher discussing the importance of tax relief with Martin Harkley of Louisville and Bert Spore of Lexington, who with Carl Jennings of Winchester and Jack Smith of Lexington attended a Small Business Tax Summit at the White House.

**IMPROVING MEDICARE / PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE**

Over the next ten years, \$153 billion will be added to modernize and improve the science of Medicare by providing a needed prescription drug benefit to help Seniors with increasing drug costs. The budget also provides a \$2.8 billion increase for the National Institutes of Health, the largest in history. More resources are also directed to Community Health Centers to provide health care for the uninsured.

**BOLSTERING NATIONAL DEFENSE**

Defense spending will be increased in 2002 by 4.6 percent or a total of \$14.2 billion. In

addition to improving military readiness, \$5.7 billion of new funding will be used for increased pay, better housing, and expanded health benefits for military retirees.

**PAYING DOWN THE NATION'S DEBT**

Since 1998, Congress has paid off \$625 billion of the national debt. Over the next

ten years, the budget will dedicate over \$2 trillion to paying down all redeemable debt. In other words, as much debt as possible. Paying anything more would require excessive premiums and penalties that are unfair to American taxpayers.



Rep. Fletcher discusses education with the President and the Secretary for Education Secretary Rod Paige.

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**Congressman Fletcher Working to Improve Health Care For All Kentuckians****HEALTH CARE, Rx DRUGS REMAIN HIGH PRIORITY**

As a family physician, Congressman Fletcher is very familiar with the problems Kentuckians face in health care, and continues to work hard in Congress to address our shared health concerns. He is working to make sure that you and your doctor—not an insurance bureaucrat—make medical decisions. He is also working to improve Medicare so that Seniors can afford the prescription drugs they need, and working to fund research into finding cures for diseases like diabetes and cancer.

Congressman Fletcher has spoken to President Bush about these issues, and the President is committed to working with Congress

in a bipartisan manner to solve these problems, and to make sure folks get the care they need to improve and prolong their lives.



Rep. Fletcher talking to constituent concerns about Social Security and Medicare.

**A REAL PATIENT'S BILL OF RIGHTS.**

Patients and their doctors, not insurance companies, should have the sole authority to make medical decisions. Insurance companies that harm patients should be held accountable. Patients who are harmed must have the right to sue but we cannot open up employers to frivolous lawsuits when they voluntarily offer health insurance to their employees. Balanced legislation will provide real patient protection without causing employers to stop providing coverage, which could cause thousands of Kentuckians to lose their health insurance.

**VOLUNTARY PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT THROUGH MEDICARE**

Patients should not be forced to choose between the medicines they need and other necessities—no American should face such a choice. Last Congress, Fletcher voted to provide all Medicare beneficiaries with at least two choices

of voluntary prescription drug benefit plans through Medicare. While this bill passed the House, it was not signed into law. As this issue is taken up again in the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress, Fletcher will work to provide Seniors the coverage they need and deserve.

**MAKING HEALTH CARE MORE AFFORDABLE**

Individuals and small businesses who can not afford health insurance should be able to join together to enjoy the purchasing advantages of large employers. Associated Health Plans help accomplish this by allowing many small businesses that currently cannot afford insurance at all, or that can only afford a bare-bones policy to join together so they will be able to afford quality health insurance for their employees through increased purchasing and bargaining power.

**RESEARCH TO FIND NEW TREATMENTS AND CURES**

Treatment rates for many kinds of cancer and for diabetes in Central Kentucky are well above the national average, but rates of people affected are above the national average as well. In the last Congress, Fletcher secured \$250 million to open America's only Centers for Disease Control Cancer Prevention Clinic at the University of Kentucky and voted for a budget that will double research funding for the National Institutes of Health by 2003.

Congressman Fletcher spent 12 years treating patients in Central Kentucky and knows more needs to be done. He will continue to fight in the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress to improve health care for all Americans.



Rep. Steve Fletcher reviews a letter regarding health care with a Dr. Darby Goodland.