



Congressman Holden presents a \$4,564.98 check to the Schuylkill Valley EMS. This grant was awarded under the U.S. Homeland Security's Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program.



Congressman Holden presents a \$5.6 million dollar check to Harold L. Paz, M.D., Senior Vice President for Health Affairs, Dean of the College of Medicine and CEO of the Medical Center and Tom Loughran, M.D., Director, Penn State Cancer Institute. For the fifth year in a row, Congressman Holden was successful in securing funds totaling \$27.7 million for the Department of Defense Appropriations bill. The funding is for the Penn State Cancer Institute at Penn State Hershey Medical Center and the National Naval Medical Center cancer research partnership.

EDUCATION

For years, college costs have been growing rapidly, far outstripping families' ability to pay them. No one should be denied the opportunity to go to college simply because of the price. The rising cost of higher education is drastically stretching the budgets of millions of students and the families who want a college degree to compete in an increasingly competitive job market. Too many students are forced to take-on higher debt burdens and work long hours, interfering with their academic studies.

Adequate preparation for and affordable access to institutions of higher education is key to ensuring America remains the strongest force in our increasingly global economy. This is why, in July, I voted to pass H.R. 2669, the College Cost Reduction Act. This legislation is designed to make postsecondary education more affordable and accessible by cutting the interest rates on subsidized student loans for undergraduates from the current 6.8 percent to 3.4 percent over the next five years, and boosting financial aid by nearly \$20 billion; (making this bill the single largest investment in college financial aid since President Roosevelt signed the Montgomery G.I. Bill into law in 1944).

Targeted to assist low- and middle-income students and their families with the greatest financial need, this proposal would cut the cost of higher education for approximately 5.5 million undergraduate students and their families nationwide. There are about 17,000 subsidized student loan borrowers in the 17th district of Pennsylvania. Once fully phased-in, this bill will save a typical Pennsylvania student borrower with \$13,866 in subsidized federal student loan debt over approximately \$4,440 over the life of the loan. As the costs of higher education continue to skyrocket, I see this legislation as an important first step towards making a postsecondary education more accessible and affordable for American families, while preparing our youth to be competitive forces in the job market.

On September 9, 2007, the President signed the College Cost Reduction Act into law, a huge step towards realizing our goal: making college affordable for every qualified student in the country. For more information and resources regarding assistance for funding a higher education, please visit the "student" section of my website at www.holden.house.gov.

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

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NEWS

FOR THE 17TH DISTRICT
FROM
REPRESENTATIVE TIM HOLDEN

DECEMBER 2007



Dear Friend,

It is a great honor and privilege to represent you in our Nation's Capitol. As your representative, I am committed to improving the quality of life for the people in the 17th Congressional District. It is a pleasure to provide you this update on my activities in Washington and our Congressional District.

For more information on my work as your Congressman, I invite you to visit my website at <http://www.holden.house.gov> or call one of my offices. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any assistance to you on any federal matter.

Best wishes and enjoy this newsletter.

Sincerely,

Tim Holden
Member of Congress



Congressman Tim Holden and Congressman Frank Lucas (OK) listen to witnesses present their testimony on energy related issues at a House Agriculture Subcommittee hearing.

Congressman Holden held a hearing on Energy issues in advance of the House Agriculture Committee writing the reauthorization of the Farm Bill. Congressman Holden is Vice Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee and Chairman of the Subcommittee on Conservation, Credit, Energy and Research. Mr. Lucas is the Ranking Member of the subcommittee.

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Congressman Holden, Pennsylvania's Adjutant General Jessica Wright and PA National Guardsmen attended the ribbon cutting ceremony at Fort Indiantown Gap for the PA National Guard's new Unit Training Equipment Site. Congressman Holden secured \$21 million in the FY05 Military Construction Appropriation bill for the 76,000 sq. ft. state-of-the-art maintenance and equipment facility. It replaces three smaller, outdated facilities.

VETERANS

I have cosponsored several pieces of legislation that will improve the care our veterans are receiving. From recently returning service men and women, to those who served years ago, I am proud to continue to honor our armed service members with the care they deserve throughout their lives.

H.R. 327, The Joshua Omvig Veterans Suicide Prevention Act directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to develop and implement a comprehensive program designed to reduce the incidence of suicide among veterans. With one out of five suicides in the United States being a veteran, we must ensure we treat their psychological injuries as well as their physical ones. This is an important first step to ensure our government keeps its promise to our veterans, but it is only the beginning.

More recently, on November 20, I and more than 70 of my colleagues sent a letter to President Bush requesting his immediate action to follow-through on the Department of Defense's (DOD) bonus promises to service members. Currently, the DOD does not provide service members with their full enlistment, re-enlistment, or other promised bonus if they are wounded in combat and unable to return to duty. This means our Defense Department is discharging combat-wounded veterans because they are no longer able to serve, and neglecting to pay full bonuses they would have otherwise received. I have cosponsored legislation that would change this policy, and require DOD to provide injury-discharged veterans with full payment of any and all remaining bonus amounts within 30 days of their discharge. I want to ensure all service members, after having served our country honorably, and after being wounded in combat, receive their promised bonus.

Having passed \$5.2 billion so far for veterans' health care, Congress continues working hard to keep the promises that have been made to our veterans and pass legislation that will have a positive impact on both veterans and their dependents.

AGRICULTURE

Agriculture is the number one industry in Pennsylvania, and our state is America's fourth largest producer of food products. As Vice-Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, I am helping to shape the next major farm legislation, the "Farm Bill," which Congress is currently considering. The Farm Bill is essential to ensuring that Americans have food security, and that agricultural producers can continue to feed us, clothe us, and fuel our future.

The House of Representatives passed its version of the Farm Bill in July. This bill, H.R. 2419, the Farm, Nutrition, and Bioenergy Act of 2007, makes historic investments in conservation, nutrition, fruit and vegetable production, and renewable energy. A large majority of the Farm Bill is devoted to Food Stamps and other nutrition programs that ensure millions of Americans, especially seniors and children, don't go hungry. Other portions are dedicated to farm income and price support, rural development, trade, animal health and welfare, and food safety. I voted for the bill because the House incorporated some new ideas and important reforms in this Farm Bill.

As Chairman of the Agriculture Conservation, Credit, Energy, and Research Subcommittee, I was especially pleased to have a strong conservation title in the 2007 Farm Bill. Conservation programs help to preserve farm and ranch land, to improve water quality and quantity, and to provide enhanced soil conservation, air quality, and wildlife habitat on working lands. This bill gives small and medium-size farms a better shot at participating in conservation programs.

The bill includes a \$4.3 billion increase in conservation funding, which is a 35 percent increase over the 2002 Farm Bill. It contains a 100 percent increase in farmland preservation funding, which is extremely important in Pennsylvania because of land development pressures. The Farm Bill also extends other important land reserve and management programs, and protects and sustains our nation's forestlands. Among other benefits for the Chesapeake Bay watershed region, the House Farm Bill creates a \$150 million program to help reduce nutrients and sediment that can flow from farm and forestland into the Chesapeake Bay, starting with restoration of the Susquehanna River.

Further, the 2007 Farm Bill will lead us in a new direction toward becoming more energy independent. We must take advantage of our agricultural and natural resources, which are so abundant in this country, so that we can take steps toward no longer being dependent upon the continuous flow of oil from the Middle East. The bill makes important new investments in renewable energy research, development and production in America. As our economy continues to change, I believe we will begin to rely more and more on bio-energy. Linking agriculture and renewable energy is important to diversifying our energy market, protecting our environment, and revitalizing rural America.

Additionally, H.R. 2419 would increase funding for nutrition programs by over \$4 billion per year. The bill would also implement mandatory country-of-origin labeling for fruit, vegetables and meat, after years of delay, so that consumers will have better information about their food.

Further, the bill invests more than \$1.5 billion in priorities to strengthen and support the fruit and vegetable and specialty crops industry, which is important to Pennsylvania. The bill also extends the Milk Income Loss Contract Program, which provides a safety net for our dairy farmers when prices fall, as they will not remain high forever.

The Farm Bill passed by the House brings additional transparency and reform to farm programs by reducing income eligibility limits for farm programs by 60 to 80 percent. It would kick all millionaires out of programs. It reduces by 60 percent the total payment cap for all direct and counter-cyclical payments. Further, the bill brings additional transparency to farm programs by directly tying payments to those who receive them. It closes loopholes that allow people to avoid payment limits by receiving money through multiple business units.

Farm Bill programs help ensure that we have a safe, stable, and secure supply of food from American farmers. When the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate work out differences in their bills, I will be there, ensuring that the 17th congressional district will benefit from the Farm Bill.



Congressman Holden presents a \$400,000 check to Sally Casey, Executive Director of Schuylkill Women in Crisis. The grant funding was awarded through the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs Violence Against Women Act. The funding will be used to enhance a coordinated response to domestic violence. Congressman Holden has been a strong supporter of the Violence Against Women program since its inception in 1994.

IMMIGRATION

This month, I became an original cosponsor of the Secure America through Verification and Enforcement (SAVE) Act. This establishes a three-pronged approach to reduce illegal immigration and strengthen our borders. The SAVE Act bill also provides the framework for a mandatory employee verification system, giving our businesses the means to ensure their employees are not illegal immigrants. This bill starts by strengthening our borders, adding 8,000 more border patrol agents over five years, and granting our agents the newest technology available to communicate and conduct aerial surveillance.

The SAVE Act requires businesses use the E-Verify program: a free and effective program that allows them to verify the individuals they're hiring are legally permitted to work in the United States.

I support an immigration reform package that strengthens our Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Border Patrol agents' abilities to enforce our laws. They need additional staff, resources, and the infrastructure necessary to effectively enforce the laws we make. Additionally, this bill expands detention capacities and increases the number of Federal District Court judges, all in order to enhance and expedite the deportation process.

Congress has produced several immigration-reform packages over the past several years, none of which have been passed into law. Amnesty is not the answer, and I pledge to do everything I can to ensure the right immigration policies are finally passed.