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Tax Rebate Check Legislation

Signed Into Law

This week, President Bush signed the economic stimulus legislation into law.

In North Carolina, 3.9 million families will receive tax rebates of up to \$1,200 per couple, plus \$300 per child as early as mid-May. By getting money into the hands of America's families and small businesses, the plan is expected to add 500,000 jobs to the economy.

By working together, Congress and the President will be delivering real relief to families across the country. The plan signed into law today will give our economy a boost, create jobs and make it easier for families to make ends meet.

The Recovery Rebates and Economic Stimulus for the American People Act will tax rebates to low- and middle-income families who are being hit hardest by the economic downturn. More than 130 million families, including 35 million families who work but earn too little to pay income taxes, will receive a tax rebate. The plan will also provide recovery rebate checks to 28 million households of senior citizens and disabled veterans.

The bipartisan legislation also includes tax cuts for small businesses, doubling the amount that they can immediately write off their taxes for capital investments, and encouraging investments in new equipment. Additionally, the plan offers immediate tax relief for all businesses that invest in new plants and equipment by speeding up depreciation provisions, so that firms can write off an additional 50 percent for investments purchased in 2008.

Small businesses create jobs and power our economy. Our plan will create 500,000 jobs and give these businesses the chance to expand and hire more workers.

Importantly, the bipartisan plan also includes provisions to help families avoid losing their homes to foreclosure. The bill expands affordable mortgage loan opportunities for families at risk of foreclosure through the Federal Housing Administration. To enhance credit availability in the mortgage market, the measure also includes a one-year increase in the loan limits for single family homes from Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

Supporting Needs of Local Communities

My legislation aimed at making it easier for communities to acquire surplus federal electronic equipment at little or no cost moved forward with a subcommittee hearing this week.

The Federal Electronic Equipment Donation Act of 2007 (FEED Act), H.R. 752, was among the bills considered by the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform during a subcommittee hearing today. The committee did not make any recommendations on the bill, but I am hopeful the full committee will soon vote to approve this bipartisan bill, which has 61 cosponsors.

The federal government spends an enormous amount of the taxpayers' money on technology. Once equipment becomes slightly outdated, it shouldn't sit idle or go to waste when there are so many needy small cities, towns, counties, schools and libraries that can still put the technology to good use.

I offered the legislation forward after Roper, N.C. Mayor Bunny Sanders contacted the office upon learning that the town was unable to secure used federal surplus electronic equipment for its Technology Center. While there is an Executive Order directing excess federal equipment to be donated to communities, it lacks the force of law.

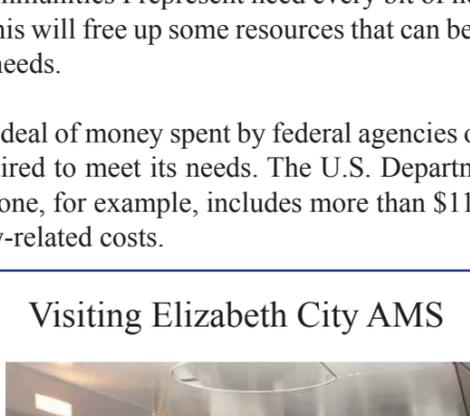
Mayor Sanders was among the witnesses who testified before the subcommittee this week about the need for the bill. I also attended the hearing and made an opening statement on the bill, which has bipartisan support.

The FEED Act would streamline the process for donating excess and surplus electronic equipment to small cities, towns, counties, schools, libraries and community-based educational non-profit organizations. Butterfield said the legislation gives preference to poorer communities, which often have the greatest needs. The act would direct federal agencies to transfer excess equipment to the General Services Administration (GSA) for transfer to the qualifying recipient at little or no cost.

The bill is particularly important to communities in eastern North Carolina and could be an important tool in building the electronic infrastructure for local governments, schools, libraries and educational non-profits. Many of the communities I represent need every bit of help they can get, and hopefully this will free up some resources that can be used to address other pressing needs.

There is a great deal of money spent by federal agencies on the electronic equipment required to meet its needs. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's budget alone, for example, includes more than \$110 million in annual technology-related costs.

Visiting Elizabeth City AMS



Congressman Butterfield touring the Airship Management Services' Elizabeth City facility this week with AMS Manager Rainier Bojo (left).

House Honors Late EC Dentist

The House this week approved my legislation naming the Post Office on the Elizabeth City State University campus in honor of the late Dr. Clifford B. Jones, Sr.

Dr. Jones was a wonderful person who cared deeply about his community. He dedicated the better part of his 99 years serving people through his profession and commitment to community service. This is a fitting honor.

The son of a physician, Dr. Jones was born in Washington County and spent his youth in Hampton, Va. before graduating from Shaw University in Raleigh, N.C. in 1923. Four years later, he earned a Doctor of Dental Surgery from Meharry Medical College Dental School in Nashville, Tenn. Shortly after earning his dental degree, he began a 66-year dental practice in Elizabeth City, N.C.

My father, Dr. G. K. Butterfield, shared a close and lifelong friendship with the fellow dentist. My father served on the Wilson City Council and encouraged Dr. Jones to run for City Council in Elizabeth City. In 1957, Dr. Jones became one of the first African Americans to run for a seat on the city council, and he was defeated by just 28 votes.

With the consent of Elizabeth City State University, I filed the legislation to rename the campus Post Office at 1704 Weeksville Road in honor of Dr. Jones. The legislation now moves on to the Senate where it is expected to be approved. It was co-sponsored by fellow N.C. Reps. David Price, Bob Etheridge, Walter Jones, Heath Shuler, Mel Watt, Brad Miller and Virginia Foxx. If approved by the Senate, the bill would be sent to President Bush to be signed into law.

In the 1960s, Dr. Jones was appointed to the Elizabeth City – Pasquotank County School Board. He also served on the Board of Trustees of the Museum of the Albemarle and as a Trustee Emeritus of Elizabeth City State University.

Over the course of his life, Dr. Jones was recognized with numerous awards and honors for his commitment to his community. He received the Meharry Medical College President's Award for Service to Mankind. Twice he was awarded the Delta Iota Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity's Certificate of Honor for exceptional service to the citizens of Northeastern North Carolina in the field of dentistry. He was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation from the City Council of Elizabeth City for his invaluable services on the City's Human Relations Committee. Dr. Jones received a Special Recognition Award for loyalty and service to the dental profession from the Old North State Dental Society.

Dr. Jones died in 1995 at the age of 99.