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Homepage
Issues
Constituent Services
For Students
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November 2008

Dear Friends,

As Thanksgiving Day approaches, I want to wish you and your family a safe and blessed holiday season.

This 2008 Fall Newsletter for Ohio provides an overview of some key developments in Congress over the past year.

Honoring my commitment to hold roundtables in all of Ohio's 88 counties, I held more than 120 discussions throughout the state. Because so many of you were willing to speak out and share your experiences, I was able to take your ideas back with me to Washington.

This year, Congress passed landmark legislation to help America's farmers compete in a 21st century economy. A new G.I. Bill of Rights gave our nation's veterans a better chance at a college education. And reauthorization of the Healthy Start program continues the fight to bring down our nation's alarmingly high infant mortality rate.

This year, we also saw the recession deepen as Ohio's middle class families face extreme economic hardship. Employers lost access to credit, threatening payrolls and jobs. And layoffs across Ohio continued to hurt families, communities, and our state as a whole. Congress acted quickly to secure funding to help businesses stay open and keep people at work, but the hard work of restoring economic growth has only just begun.

In the next Congress - and with a new administration - we will ensure that policies in Washington benefit middle class families back home. We will work to put our economy on a new course, a course marked by job growth rather than job loss, wage increases rather than wage stagnation, and trade surpluses rather than trade deficits.

Ohio has what it takes to thrive in the global economy. We can lead the way in alternative energy, forge new ground in the high tech arena, expand the reach of our agricultural sector, and build on our presence in medical research and development. There are exciting opportunities, and I look forward to working with you to ensure that our state and our

Senator Brown's Thanksgiving Message

» [Click here](#) to listen to a Thanksgiving Message from Senator Brown

What We Can Do

As your United States Senator, my top priority is ensuring the best constituent services possible. My office is able to help you with concerns and questions you have about the federal government. We can also help you navigate federal programs and interact with federal agencies.

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Website

I am proud to serve as your United States Senator. To better serve you, I have created a website that is as much a "virtual office" as it is a source for information about your government.

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Sign up to receive my e-Newsletters and stay connected with what's happening in Congress. I send out monthly newsletters as well as regular issue-based e-alerts to help keep you informed about the latest actions in Congress.

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nation come out of this recession stronger, smarter, and with a rock solid, financially secure middle class.

I invite you to visit my website often and email me with your concerns and your ideas. Together, we will change Ohio, we will change our nation, and we will usher in a new era of productivity and prosperity.

Have a safe and happy holiday season.

Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown



P.S. 2008 brings the departure of four members of Ohio's congressional delegation. I'd like to thank Representatives Ralph Regula (Navarre), David Hobson (Springfield), Deborah Pryce (Upper Arlington), and Steve Chabot (Cincinnati) for their many years of dedicated public service.

Food Programs for Ohio Families

The cost of food is expected to rise between five and six percent in 2008, a daunting challenge for Ohio families already struggling to put food on the table. On a single day in Hocking County last winter, more than seven percent of the county's residents lined up at a local foodbank. And this year's economic volatility has further increased the strain on food banks across the state.

We must work together to ensure that Ohio children don't go to bed hungry, that seniors on fixed incomes don't have to choose between medicine and food, and that working families aren't forced to let other bills pile up so they can feed their families.

This spring I received a letter from Melissa in Sylvania, Ohio. Melissa wrote:

This past winter, we saw you on our local news. You were explaining that the Toledo Food Bank was running low on supplies. Our 7th graders decided to take action...They wrote morning announcements, created commercials for our school wide news show and made posters to advertise our food drive. After our two week food drive, we were able to donate over 400 items which equaled 311 pounds to the Toledo Food Bank.

Melissa is doing her part. We must do our part, too.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), which helps fund our nation's food banks, is the quickest way to get food to Ohioans who need it. This year I worked on a bipartisan basis to secure more funding for TEFAP to help prevent Ohio families and children from going to bed hungry this winter.

While we have taken steps in the right direction to ensure that families have the food they need, there is still more work to do. In the new Congress we must work to create job opportunities for Ohioans who are struggling economically, while ensuring that safety net programs are in place to help those in need.

Creating Green Jobs and Alternative Energy in Ohio

As our nation transitions to a 21st century economy and we work to free ourselves from dependence on foreign oil, there is no better place to look than Ohio for leadership in the alternative energy field.

Our state has already made a name for itself, ranking in the top five nationwide for the number of solar energy firms housed in our state and ranking sixth for money invested in solar energy. In Toledo, two companies, First Solar and Xunlight, are leading the way in bringing solar energy products to the market. This summer, First Solar broke ground on a huge expansion of its Perrysburg facility, where it manufactures solar panels.

In northeast Ohio, the Cleveland Foundation, Case Western Reserve University, and other universities are addressing alternative energy on every front. They are working to install offshore wind turbines on Lake Erie while supporting green energy manufacturing. Canton is home to a fuel cells project that is a partnership between Rolls Royce and Stark State College.

In southwest Ohio, Dayton is leading the country with the National Composite Center and the Air Force Research Lab, both of which are developing green technologies and putting them to work.

And across Ohio, we are reducing our dependence on foreign oil by producing home grown bio-fuels. Production plants are currently operating in six Ohio counties from Darke, to Marion, to Coshocton.

Ohio has what it takes—the workforce, the infrastructure, and the expertise—to become the Silicon Valley of Alternative Energy. I will continue to work in Congress to ensure that our state and nation lead the energy revolution.

Bridging the Education and Employment Gap in Ohio

Ohio is hurting. I hear too many stories from hardworking Ohioans like Shawna from Akron, whose husband, an electrician, was laid off in January because of the bad economy. Or Paul in Tiffin who watched as his job manufacturing spark plugs at Honeywell was shipped to Mexico.

Coupled with young people who are leaving the state in record numbers, we have a complicated problem. To rebuild Ohio's economy we must not only create jobs, we must retrain workers and give our youth the skills required to fill 21st century jobs.

Earlier this year, I invited all of Ohio's college and university presidents to Washington, D.C. for a first-of-its-kind summit to discuss our common challenges and opportunities in the areas of education and workforce training. The 46 presidents who attended discussed new ways to bridge the gap between the skills of our workforce and the needs of Ohio employers. We talked about ways to increase communication and coordination between the K-12 and higher education systems, as well as expanding curriculum and degree options, especially for high tech and skilled labor jobs.

The next step will be six regional conferences that will take place in December across the state. These conferences will include college and university presidents in each region as well as representatives from the K-12 system and regional businesses. The focus will be on creating the partnerships that will keep Ohio students in Ohio and make sure they are prepared to fill jobs in existing and emerging fields alike.

I am confident that working together, Ohioans can build a thriving education and job creation system that attracts new students, new businesses, and job opportunities to Ohio.

Fighting for America's Veterans

Serving on the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee is an honor and a duty I do not take lightly. Although we recently passed the single largest increase to veterans' education funding since the G.I. bill, there is more we need to do to fulfill our obligations to the men and women who served our nation.

At a roundtable I conducted at the Louis Stokes VA Hospital in Cleveland, I met with many

veterans who recently returned from deployment and had enrolled in college. They spoke about the difficulty they faced returning to classes, finding housing, and securing financial aid. After hearing their experiences, I introduced the Supporting Education for Returning Veterans (SERV) Act to provide student veterans with the support they need to succeed in higher education. Modeled after a program at Cleveland State University, the SERV Act creates a grant program to provide schools with funds to establish campus Centers of Excellence for Veteran Student Success. These centers will serve as a single point of contact for veteran student support. This legislation was included in the Higher Education Opportunity Act, which became law in August.

I also heard from Terry Carson, the CEO of Harrison Community Hospital in Cadiz, Ohio. He testified at a field hearing on veteran care in rural areas. He spoke of emergency rooms that treated veterans but did not receive reimbursements from the VA for the care they provided. In response, I introduced S. 2142, The Veterans Emergency Care Fairness Act of 2008, which was included in the recently passed Veterans' Mental Health and Other Care Improvements Act of 2008. It closes the loophole and removes the veteran from the middle by requiring the VA to cover the cost of care provided to veterans while a transfer to a VA facility is pending.

I am honored to work with Ohio veterans and their families to keep the promises of a grateful nation to those who have served.

Addressing the Housing Crisis

The relentless pace of foreclosures continues in Ohio, and tens of thousands of our neighbors still face the prospect of losing their home as the economy weakens.

Congress has taken several steps to provide help to Ohio's middle class families—from tax relief, to more support for counseling, to the Neighborhood Stabilization Program under which some \$258 million in funds will flow to Ohio communities to combat the effects of the foreclosure crisis.

In nearly every instance, progress came despite opposition from the White House, and despite filibusters and veto threats.

In late September, Treasury Secretary Paulson told my colleagues on the Senate Banking Committee and me that he needed authority to spend \$700 billion to shore up our economy. He got that authority, but he has yet to use it to attack the root of our problem - the housing crisis.

I've personally urged him to use this authority to follow the model created by FDIC Chairman Sheila Bair. I spoke with her last week about how she is rewriting thousands of mortgages that the government took over with the failure of IndyMac Bank. She told me that these loans don't just help homeowners, but save taxpayers money by making these loans affordable and reducing defaults.

We will have tremendous challenges in the next Congress. But few are more important than housing. Millions of families may lose their homes, needlessly, if we do not act quickly.

Trade Policies that Work

When thousands of Ohio jobs are shipped overseas each year, something is wrong with US trade policy.

When steelworkers in Lorain, autoworkers in Dayton, machine shops in Akron, and farmers in Western Ohio do everything right but can't get ahead in the global economy, something isn't working.

When companies actually get tax breaks for moving their operations out of the United

States, something needs to change.

When our nation's food and drug supply is tainted with dangerous products freely imported from countries with nonexistent or unenforced safety regulations, something has to give.

And when our nation—with all of its productive capacity, entrepreneurial spirit, innovative thinkers and workforce talent—is running huge trade deficits, our nation is either going to change course or continue to lose ground.

When it comes to trade, we continue to play a bad hand and expect to win the pot.

Last year I wrote legislation designed to bring US trade policy into the 21st century. It would shelve dead end trade deals, fight anticompetitive tactics such as currency manipulation and dumping, and establish concrete goals for our nation's trade agenda.

I will continue to work in the next Congress to ensure that our nation fully participates in global trade, and that Americans and America fully benefit from it.

Progress for Rural Ohio

Agricultural communities throughout Ohio play a critical role in the state's economy and its culture, and I am proud to be the first Ohioan in 40 years to serve on the Senate Agriculture Committee. Legislation authorized by the Agriculture Committee has invested \$3.3 billion in rural Ohio through grants and loans for rural broadband, water and sewer projects, and to help small businesses. These funds helped provide access to broadband services for Monroe County, a new water treatment plant in Mercer County, and a new fire station in Logan County.

Of course, more needs to be done to create jobs and address critical community needs. This past October, I hosted Senate Agriculture Committee hearings in Steubenville and Chillicothe on the effects of the economic crisis on rural America. These hearings provided valuable insights on how we can create jobs and grow the economy in rural Ohio. More than half of Ohio's counties are designated as rural areas by U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). With inadequate and aging infrastructure, high unemployment rates, and lack of access to affordable health care, these areas are particularly vulnerable to the compounding effects of an economic downturn. As Congress considers economic stimulus legislation in the next Congress, I will keep the needs of rural Ohio at the forefront.

Healthy Start

This fall, Congress passed legislation that I sponsored to reauthorize our national Healthy Start program. This legislation is essential in helping our nation's most disadvantaged children survive infancy and live longer, healthier lives.

The United States ranks 32nd out of 33 of the world's industrialized nations in the rate of infant deaths. A crucial indicator of the health and well being of populations across the world, infant mortality rates refer to the number of infants who die before their first year of life. Some of the main causes of infant mortality are low birth weight, complications in pregnancy, congenital abnormalities, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), and respiratory distress syndrome. By providing consistent prenatal and postnatal care and nutritional services to low-income women, Healthy Start has achieved a tangible reduction in U.S. infant mortality rates.

In Ohio, we have two very effective Healthy Start programs. "Moms First" in Cleveland and "Caring for 2" in Columbus have helped numerous pregnant women. They help women regardless of their financial or living situation.

Given our country's alarming infant mortality statistics, it was critical that Congress acted quickly to reauthorize Healthy Start. That's why I worked on a bipartisan basis with Senator Richard Burr (R-NC) to make sure this program stayed afloat and received a boost in

authorized funding. This legislation was signed by the president on October 3, 2008, ensuring that more of our country's infants survive and begin life in good health.

Delivering Assistance to those in Need

The following programs can help Ohioans weather these difficult economic times.

Jobs Centers

One-Stop Job Locations help Ohioans re-enter the job market, and develop new skills and training. More information on these centers can be found [here](#).

Housing Counselors

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) sponsors counseling agencies throughout the state to help Ohioans facing foreclosure, credit problems, and other housing issues. More information can be found by visiting this [link](#).

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

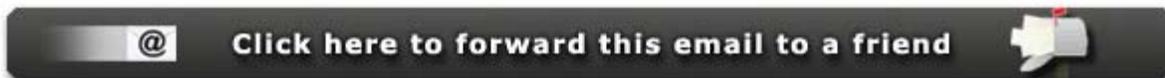
LIHEAP is designed to help households that are struggling to pay home energy bills. More information about this program is available by calling 1-800-282-0880 (TDD: 1-800-686-1557) or visiting this [link](#).

The Qualified Medicare Beneficiary Program

This is one of several federal programs designed to help low-income seniors reduce their out-of-pocket health care costs by covering Medicare premiums and coinsurance payments. More information about this program is available by contacting your local branch of the Department of Jobs and Family Services, which can be located [here](#).

Benefit Banks

Benefit banks help connect families to vital resources in Ohio. Ohio Benefit Bank, with 570 locations throughout the state, was created to make applying for state and federal benefits and obtaining eligibility information easier. More information on Benefit Banks is available [here](#).



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