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Thank you for reading the Conaway Chronicle.

Early last week, President Bush rightly rejected the Democrats' flawed version of the War Supplemental funding measure by exercising his power of the veto. Now, without wasting any more time, Congress can get back to the business of funding American troops without strings attached and without billions in spending for non-emergency pork projects. To delay the funding for our troops who need supplies and armor any longer is preposterous and wrong-headed. A couple weeks ago, Members on both sides of the aisle were able to hear directly from General Petraeus about the path to success in Iraq. He gave us an honest assessment of what is happening on the ground, both the progress that has been made and the challenges that remain with al Qaeda and sectarian violence. Victory is the only option in this fight. A plan for funding the Global War against Islamic Jihadists is time-sensitive. Now that the politics are over, Congress can now finalize a proposal that meets our warriors' needs and shows our enemies we are serious about creating a stable Iraq.



Last week in Congress, the House voted to pass the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2007 ([**H.R. 1592**](#)). I voted against this legislation as it categorizes victims of violent crimes based on gender, sexual orientation, and race, among others; and it imposes harsher penalties against their attackers based on those criteria. It is a sad day when legislation such as this passes through the House. We are sliding on a slippery slope when we try to dissect someone's thought patterns before they committed a crime. All crimes are hateful and should be punished accordingly. To step in with a federal mandate and confer an enhanced penalty for certain crimes committed against one group, where the exact same crime committed against another group does not get the same penalty, is unequal justice. This is just the first step to legislating thought crimes and President Bush has promised to veto this legislation if it gets to his desk. [**Click here**](#) to listen to my podcast on this issue.

Also last week, the House voted to strengthen the federal Head Start program, but failed to protect the rights of faith-based charity organizations. [**H.R. 1429**](#) approves \$7.4 billion in spending for the next fiscal year, increases enrollment, boosts salaries and expands services. However, an amendment allowing religious groups to take religion into account when hiring was struck down in the House. While the resources to fund Head Start are significant, more work is needed to achieve the ultimate program goal of closing the readiness gap between Head Start children and their more advantaged peers as they enter kindergarten. Last year, Republicans led the House in passing the School Readiness Act to close the readiness gap, address weaknesses in the Head Start financial control system, and strengthen early childhood services for disadvantaged children. Additionally, the House-passed bill included provisions ensuring faith-based programs could compete for federal Head Start grants without surrendering their constitutionally protected right to

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take religion into their account in hiring practices. I will keep working to protect faith-based organizations in the final legislation.

Two weekends ago, I was back in the district to announce the winners of our annual Congressional High School Art Competition. Joey Heredia, an Andrews High School senior, was awarded first place with his photography piece, "Sacred Silence." Joey's artwork will be sent to Washington, DC to be hung in the Cannon Tunnel, a walkway inside the U.S. Capitol Building. This walkway is used by Members of Congress, congressional staff, and many tourists as they enter the Capitol. The level of talent in this year's Congressional Art Competition was very impressive. The panel of judges consisted of Pam Price and Chris Stanley, both of the UTPB art faculty. Second place was awarded to Carl Spartz, a student at Odessa Permian High School, for his piece entitled "214 to Seminole." Third place went to Dustin Reno, also from Odessa Permian High School, for his work entitled, "Insanity." Fourth place went to Brice Evans of Midland Lee High School, and fifth place went to Ben Frederick of Llano High School. The 2nd and 3rd place winners will have their artwork hung in one of my district offices for the next year. We had 25 entries from high schools across District 11 and the work that all the students put forward was extraordinary.



Thank you for reading the Conaway Chronicle. We will be back with you next week with another update from Washington.

The Conaway Chronicle will be issued every Monday or Tuesday when Congress is in session. I hope that you will find it informative and will continue to stay informed with my recent legislative activities in Washington. In the meantime, if you have any questions, concerns or suggestions for future issues of the Conaway Chronicle, please visit the website at www.house.gov/conaway or don't hesitate to call me at (202) 225-3605. Check out my blog at www.conawayblog.com!

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