



Congressman

**Wally
Herger**



Reports from Washington

108th Congress - Second Session

Volume One

WALLY HERGER

2d DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

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**COMMITTEE ON
WAYS AND MEANS**

SUBCOMMITTEES:

**CHAIRMAN
HUMAN RESOURCES
TRADE**

**Congress of the United States
House of Representatives**

Dear Friends:

What a great time to be an American! As we look forward to the challenges of the year ahead, we should pause to reflect on the incredible successes of 2003 - the spectacular capture of deposed Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein by U.S. soldiers, a year of promising economic growth and record new home construction, as well as continued job creation.

The tides have turned in the war on terrorism. In the more than two years since terrorists attacked the Pentagon and World Trade Centers, the United States and our allies around the world have delivered justice to terrorists and tyrants alike. Though we have been successful to date, terrorist threats persist. Letters containing the highly poisonous powder ricin were sent to the Capitol Building in Washington, closing office buildings and disrupting mail delivery. Thankfully, nobody was harmed by this attack, but it underscores that the threat of terrorism is still present.

As we consider next year's federal spending, we must do whatever it takes to balance the budget. Even though we are in a time of war, the current deficits are simply unacceptable. I intend to make some tough choices when it comes to reining in federal spending, and I will urge others in Congress to do the same.

In February, the House Resources Committee held a hearing to look into the recently revised Sierra Nevada forest plan. For the sake of our northern California communities, forests and economy, it is critical that this and other forest management plans adequately address the very real fire danger our region faces due to poor forest health. Accordingly, I will continue to work to promote common sense environmental policies in Congress, and will seek to modernize our existing laws.

You will find enclosed my 2004 Congressional Questionnaire. I hope you will take a moment to complete and return it. Your input is valuable to me as I seek to better represent the interests of northern California in Washington. Also, if you have a moment, please feel free to visit my web site on the Internet at <http://www.house.gov/herger/>.



Sincerely,

Wally
WALLY HERGER
Member of Congress

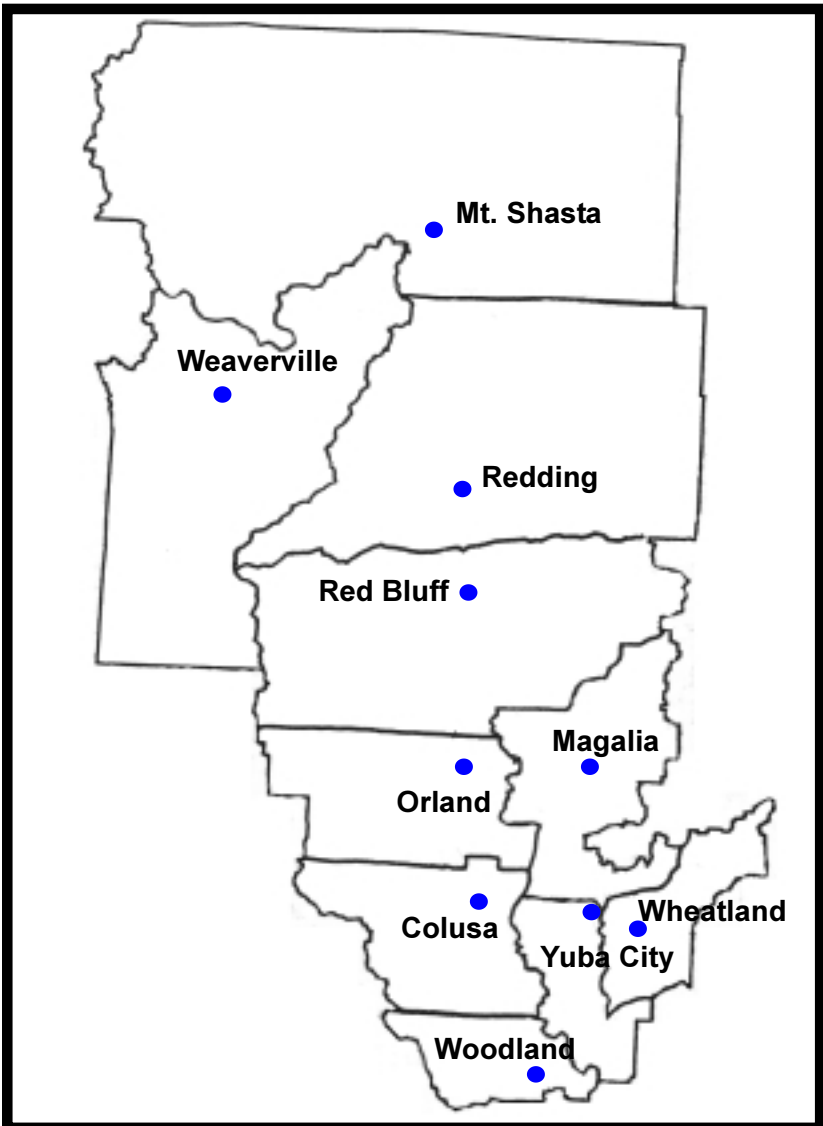
**Inside
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This mailing was prepared, published, and mailed at taxpayer expense.

Town Hall Meeting Schedule

I will be holding a series of town hall meetings throughout our Congressional District. Town hall meetings are an excellent opportunity to influence what happens in Congress. I hope you and your neighbors will come and participate by asking questions, offering comments and helping me to better represent you.



Saturday, April 24

Magalia
9:00 AM - Paradise Pines Property Owners Association Building
14211 Wycliff Way

Orland
NOON - Carnegie Center
912 Third Street

Woodland
3:30 PM - Leake Room
Woodland Public Library
250 First Street

Monday, April 26

Colusa
9:00 AM - City Council Chambers
425 Webster Street

Yuba City
NOON - City Council Chambers
1201 Civic Center Boulevard

Wheatland
3:30 PM - Pioneer Hall
315 B Street

Saturday, May 1

Red Bluff
9:00 AM - Red Bluff Community Center
1500 S. Jackson Street

Mt. Shasta
3:30 PM - Mt. Shasta Elementary School Cafeteria - 501 Cedar Street

Monday, May 3

Weaverville
10:00 AM - Trinity County Library
211 N. Main Street

Redding
2:00 PM - City Council Chambers
777 Cypress Avenue

Service Academy Nominations



Young men and women interested in applying for an appointment to one of the service academies must have their applications in by the October 31, 2004 deadline. To be eligible, you must be a resident of California's 2nd Congressional District, and must be between the ages of 17 and 22 years old. If you are interested in this unique educational experience, please call my office at 530-893-8363, or write me at the following address:

Rep. Wally Herger
55 Independence Circle, Suite 104
Chico, CA 95973

Veterans Affairs Secretary Anthony Principi meets with Congressman Herger and local veterans advocates at the Redding VA Outpatient Clinic to discuss the increasing need for inpatient services in the north state.



Congressman Wally Herger
2268 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Return Address (please print)
Name _____
Street _____
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

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Medicare and What it Means to You



A voluntary prescription drug benefit was recently added to Medicare. Yet many have yet to hear the facts - what the plan does, when it goes into effect, and how it can help you. While not perfect, the new law is a step in the right direction.

First off, the plan gives seniors - especially the 12 million low-income seniors who need the most help - relief from high prescription drug prices. It also provides better access to medicines at a lower cost while maintaining an individual's choice of drug plans. To help bring drug costs down and make prescriptions more readily available, the new law seeks to bring generic medications to the market faster. Finally, the plan helps protect the benefits of those who already have drug coverage from former employers.

Later this year, a Medicare approved drug discount card will deliver seniors up to 25% savings on prescription costs. Low-income seniors will receive an additional \$600 cash subsidy in 2004 and 2005 as part of this discount card. The card will be effective until January 2006, when the full prescription drug benefit becomes available. Seniors can begin enrolling in their choice of drug plans in 2005.

Seniors who are happy with their current coverage do not have to enroll, and will see no changes in their current benefits. No senior will be forced into anything - not an HMO, not the new drug benefit, not anything. In 2006, those who enroll in the new plan will pay monthly premiums of about \$35 with a \$250 deductible. After that, Medicare will pay 75% of their drug costs up to \$2250, and will pay 95% of their catastrophic, out-of-pocket costs over \$3600.

Although many are happy with their current coverage, since the mid-1980s, the number of employers offering prescription drug coverage to retirees has steadily declined. The new law attempts to slow this process by offering employers 28 cents for every dollar they spend on drug benefits for retirees -- an incentive to continue coverage.

Rising health costs affect everyone, not just se-



During a recent visit to Gridley High School, students meet with Congressman Herger and discuss national issues of importance to northern California.

niors. For this reason, the plan establishes Health Savings Accounts. These tax deductible savings accounts can be used to pay for medical expenses incurred by an individual or family.

Another important element of the program- especially for northern California - is assistance for rural health care. The plan significantly increases Medicare reimbursements for hospital facilities in areas like ours, making it easier to recruit qualified physicians.

I believe this Medicare plan is a positive first step. Along the way it has gained the support of more than 300 nationally recognized healthcare advocacy groups, including the AARP, the American Medical Association, the Easter Seals, and the American Hospital Association.

The new Medicare law will help millions of seniors who currently have no drug coverage defray those high costs. While not perfect, for the first time we are providing a voluntary prescription drug benefit for seniors under Medicare - and that's worthy of support.

Want to learn more? Contact 1-800-MEDICARE.

Congressman
Wally Herger



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
Official Business

Wally Herger
M.C.
Presorted Standard

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2004 Congressional Questionnaire