



the leahy letter

A Newsletter from Patrick Leahy, U.S. Senator for Vermont

Spring 1983



Vermont ETV Public Affairs Director Jack Barry with Senators Andrews and Leahy.

SENATORS HEAR VERMONTERS TESTIFY ON RURAL PROBLEMS

It was a most unusual Senate hearing. It took place in a television studio and eleven Vermonters testified from their home by telephone.

They joined Senators Mark Andrews (R-N.D.) and me on February 14 over the Vermont ETV network to discuss all aspects of rural life and development, from rural jobs and housing to agriculture and the delivery of health services to rural areas.

A full 45 minutes of the three hour hearing was devoted to Vermonters who called in by phone to tell their government representatives how federal programs were working (or not working) in our state, how they could be improved, and generally what was on their minds.

It was the first time in U.S. Senate history that call-in testimony was accepted and became part of the Committee record.

One caller, a shut-in who never would have had an opportunity to testify in a formal committee hearing room, expressed her fears about social security and elderly programs. Just being able to talk about these problems and sense that someone was listening, made the entire hearing worthwhile, she said.

We all owe a round of applause to Vermont ETV. It supplied the expert staff and technology that brought Vermonters a little closer to their government on that frosty February evening.

Dear Friends:

Along with my fellow Vermonters, I have a deep and abiding interest in arms control. Most Vermonters, whether supporters of a nuclear freeze or of another plan for nuclear arms control, realize this is the most important issue facing the world today. At a time when the two superpowers could destroy each other, and most of the rest of the world, our concern is truly justified.

After meeting with both U.S. and Soviet arms negotiators, it is distressing to see how little headway is being made to reduce strategic forces. It is good, however, that President Reagan has moved from his original position and has recently made a new proposal to limit intermediate range weapons. Let us hope that the Soviets now realize that they, also, have a responsibility in this area. The Soviets must learn that arms limitation can only come from mutually acceptable agreements -- not from anti-nuclear demonstrations in Europe.

President Reagan has shown responsible flexibility and a modest start -- let's hope for the sake of peace that the Soviets can show similar responsibility.

Sincerely,



Vermonters (left to right) Stone, Patterson and Rikert at Senate Agriculture hearing on dairy price supports.

DAIRY HEARING

Three Vermont farmers testified at a U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee hearing in April presided over by Senator Leahy. Paul Stone of Orwell, Lloyd Patterson of North Danville and Jim Rikert of Sharon told of the effects of dairy price support cuts upon small family farms.

EXIT BURFORD

The President still maintains that Anne Burford did a good job as Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Mrs. Burford is finally gone from EPA, a year after I released studies showing the management of the agency was in shambles, and months after suggesting the President fire her.

Changing the guard at EPA will not improve the agency's performance.

If the public health and safety is to be protected by the enforcement of our environmental laws, the President must give the new administrator the clear authority to carry out his duties.

The issue is not whether William D. Ruckelshaus is qualified to direct the EPA, but whether Administration policy will now recognize the concerns of the public and allow our environmental laws to be enforced.

OMB GAG ORDER

Vermont nonprofit organizations were quick to see the dangers of an Office of Budget and Management revision to rules restricting the manner in which a grant recipient may communicate with the government.

The OMB revision would disallow any funds for any organization which lobbied for its program, even if that lobbying was done with *private* funds.

OMB defined "political advocacy" so broadly as to cover contact with government at any level. For instance, federal funds could be denied a poverty group that made any contact with a state welfare agency if that group was conveying a point of view.

I joined the many Vermont organizations opposing the issue, advising OMB Director David Stockman of the obvious infringement of constitutional rights of free speech.

The outcry from nonprofit organizations resulted in OMB withdrawing the directive, but a modified version is in the works.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY?

Protection of the environment? Preservation of prime agricultural land?

These two topics are not mentioned in the Rural Development Strategy released in January by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Also missing are funds for rural housing (cut 67%) and money to improve community facilities to attract industry and development in downtown areas (cut 50%).

The federal bias for urban programs persists and aid to rural states, like Vermont, diminishes.

PITTSFORD FISH HATCHERY

The first phase of the rehabilitation of the Pittsford Fish Hatchery is contained in the Emergency Jobs Bill.

An initial \$188,000 in funds to rehabilitate springs, wells and repair roads at the federal fish hatchery is part of a \$6 million program to produce land locked salmon and lake trout for Lake Champlain.

As Charlie Spencer, outdoor editor of *The Rutland Herald* has noted, it's "good news" for Vermont sportsmen.



Senator Leahy on camera with Daniel M. Kush, Legislative Counsel of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

CHAMBER AIRS BUSINESS VIEWS

Senator Leahy appeared on the American Business Network recently to discuss problems of small businesses and initiatives necessary to improve the business climate in the U.S. Daniel M. Kush, Legislative Counsel for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce was the moderator.

JOBS ACT

Congress passed a \$4.6 billion jobs bill estimated to provide up to 1 million part-time jobs, the equivalent of full-time employment for approximately 400,000 Americans.

There are approximately 10 million people out of work in the United States. The most recent Vermont figures show almost 20,000 unemployed residents, a 1.3% increase from a year ago.

This legislation is a first step in providing aid and jobs to victims of the current recession. Congress must take further steps to address the causes of unemployment in America.

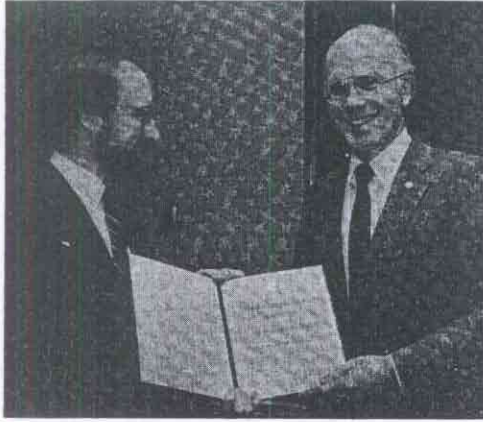
PUBLICATIONS

Two more articles by Senator Leahy appeared in national publications this year.

An article on the cost effectiveness of organic farming has been published in the January/February edition of *Food Monitor*.

Sierra, the publication of the Sierra Club carries his article criticizing the performance of the Environmental Protection Agency and its failure to enforce the nation's environmental protection laws.

Reprints can be obtained by writing or calling our offices in Burlington, Montpelier or Washington, D.C.



Senator Leahy receives First Amendment Award from Steven R. Dornfeld, President of the Society of Professional Journalists.

JOURNALISTS CITE LEAHY FOR RIGHT TO KNOW EFFORTS

Quill Magazine, the publication of the Society of Professional Journalists, called it a "First Amendment Award for a First Class Senator."

Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) called it a great honor.

The occasion was the Society's annual First Amendment award reception given to the individual who did the most in 1982 to preserve freedom of the press and public from government infringements on their right to know.

It was the first time a United States Senator had won the award.

Steven R. Dornfeld, National President of the Society, told newsmen that "Senator Leahy did the impossible", causing an astounding reversal of Administration efforts to weaken the Freedom of Information Act.

The Administration proposals sought broad exemptions on the release of information sought on law enforcement, national security and business records. The Freedom of Information Act has been responsible for public awareness of unsafe consumer products, harmful drugs and medical devices. It embarrassed some government officials when it disclosed waste of taxpayers' money. Leahy thought bureaucratic red faces were a small price to pay for open government.

"It's hard for me to remember that FOIA is only a statute, and not part of the Constitution," Senator Leahy said in receiving the award.

And he told the roomful of newsmen attending the ceremony that he would work to strengthen the Act during the 98th Congress.

"FOIA must be made more resistant to obstruction from within by a government hostile to its purposes," he said.

WAR ON CRIME

Call it a domestic defense budget. Call it a war on crime. But let's move against one of the nation's gravest internal problems -- drug trafficking and the influence of organized crime in our country.

I cosponsored the crime package in the 97th Congress which was vetoed by the President. The 98th Congress will face the issue again.

The comprehensive plan includes a \$150 million grant in aid program for state and local criminal justice agencies.

It creates a cabinet level office to pursue a comprehensive drug strategy to coordinate federal, state and local agencies in the fight against drugs. It stiffens penalties for smugglers and calls for treaty negotiations with countries whose banking laws permit them to be havens for drug profiteers.

The President agreed with our bill, but said it was too costly. As sponsors of the crime fighting package, we respond that no amount of great sounding rhetoric will be of any use in this fight unless funds are available for the investigation, equipment and people necessary to fight this war.

Stiffer sentencing, expanded federal jurisdiction over juvenile crime, an anti-arson program and right to seizure of organized crime assets are necessary.

Judges need greater discretion in bail hearings to keep dangerous persons out of the community until they receive a speedy trial.

The war on crime won't be won with words. Federal, state and local police agencies need stronger crime fighting laws.

Let's get on with it.

TYLENOL/TAMPERING

Following the tragedy of the Tylenol poisonings in Chicago last year, the Senate considered legislation at the end of the 97th Congress to combat the threat of tampering with drugs, food and other consumer products.

I worked to shape a fair and workable bill, and my amendment relating to penalties for spreading false information about tampering was adopted by the full Senate.

The bill that passed the Congress was vetoed by the President when he vetoed a crime package that was agreed to by the Congress shortly before it adjourned.

New legislation has been introduced in both Houses. I have cosponsored the Senate bill.

Action Line
CALL TOLL FREE
1-800-642-3193

POSTSCRIPT

The Board of Directors of the National Newspaper Association "in recognition of the fine contribution made in support of American journalism and in furthering the interests of the hometown newspaper printing and publishing business," presented Senator Leahy with its distinguished service certificate on March 9.

The presentation was made in Washington. NNA directors urged continued vigilance on the Freedom of Information Act and also discussed a problem affecting small newspapers -- the inflated appraisals of small newspaper properties as a result of offers made by newspaper chains to purchase them.

BUDGET CUTS...LET'S KEEP IT FAIR

As the country approaches the third consecutive year of record budget deficits, all Vermonters agree that federal spending must be brought under control.

But I'm sure these same Vermonters would also agree that cuts should be fair, and not aimed at one segment of our society.

The proposed child nutrition budget is unfair.

In the words of Senator Mark Andrews (R-N.D.), who serves on the Agriculture Committee with me, cuts in child nutrition programs are "plain stupid."

Under the policies of the Administration, 290,000 children have lost health services; 1.5 million children have been denied support under the Aid to Families with Needy Children Program; 200,000 children and mothers are losing preventative maternal and child health services; 1.1 million children are losing free and reduced price school lunches; 900,000 children no longer receive school breakfasts; over 1,000 schools are closing school lunch programs and 500,000 children no longer get lunch at summer play programs.

We pay the price for this neglect in displaced families, rising levels of child abuse and increased incidents of infant mortality in states with high unemployment.

It isn't fair by any standard, and I know the overwhelming majority of Vermonters will support efforts to restore these cuts.

LEGISLATIVE RECOGNITION

The National Association of Community Health Care Centers presented Senator Leahy its highest award for legislative achievement at ceremonies held in Washington, D.C., on March 8.

It was the fourth major award he has received in the last two years for his ongoing efforts to improve rural health care delivery in the United States.

The League of Conservation Voters named Senator Leahy as one of seven Senators to receive its green shamrock award for efforts on environmental issues during the 97th Congress. The award was given to six other Senators whose voting record on environmental issues was 85% or better during the session.

The fourth biennial poll of reporters covering the U.S. Senate rated Senator Leahy in the top 20% of that body.

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

VOTERS DECIDE IN PUTNEY

The voters of Putney, and not the federal government, made the final decision on whether the village would be the site of a minimum security prison on the old Windham College campus.

Assurances given to the village and to me by officials of the Federal Bureau of Prisons were honored after Putney voted overwhelmingly on March 30 against the prison.

If all federal programs were conducted with the same candor and respect of the local community's support and participation, then the Federal government would be perceived much less as an ogre by the general public.

Senator Patrick Leahy's Subcommittees during the 98th Congress

AGRICULTURE

Ranking Minority Member - Agricultural Production, Marketing, and Stabilization of Prices Subcommittee

Nutrition Subcommittee

Rural Development, Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee

APPROPRIATIONS

Foreign Operations Subcommittee

HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee

Interior Subcommittee

District of Columbia Subcommittee

JUDICIARY

Ranking Minority Member - Security and Terrorism Subcommittee

Constitution Subcommittee

Patents, Copyrights and Trademarks Subcommittee

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Vice Chairman - Subcommittee on Legislation and Rights of Americans

Budget Subcommittee

Patrick J. Leahy
U.S.S.

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