



Skoch2010 Issues Update

November 25, 2009

Congressman Boozman: "A Follower"

We congratulate Congressman Boozman for his support in his weekly constituent update for two important causes: Helping families adopt foster children, and feeding hungry people. We couldn't agree more with those important initiatives.

Congressman Boozman points out that he is "a proud cosponsor" of the Adoption Tax Relief Guarantee Act of 2009. He states "This legislation introduced by Congressman Joe Wilson (SC-2) makes permanent the \$10,000 child adoption tax credit, which is set to expire in 2010." And we say amen.

But note that, again (and disappointingly), our Congressman Boozman is *following*, rather than *leading*.

You will likely remember Congressman Wilson, the sponsor of the adoption relief bill: He was the one who yelled "You lie!" during one of President Obama's addresses. (And we'll admit we said to ourselves "Amen!" when he did that...) A quick look at Congressman Wilson shows that he is not only outspoken, but he *sponsors* important legislation and he *leads*! And we need leaders--not followers--in Congress!

Look at his tough stand demanding a panel to fully account for how Stimulus Act money is being spent. From his web site: "“I call on the President to appoint this panel immediately,” said Congressman Wilson. “The Recovery Act is one of the largest spending bills in our nation’s history and it’s critical that we work together to maintain our goals of transparency and accountability.” And he will act: "If this panel is not appointed by December 1, 2009, Congressman Wilson will call for an outside, independent examination of spending and reporting inaccuracies of every stimulus dollar appropriated."

Wouldn't it be great if our representative was as disposed to *lead*?

GOVTRACK.US, a leading analytical site that assesses legislators' performance, evaluates our congressman like this: "Boozman is a follower according to our statistical analysis of bills in this legislative session. Boozman tends to cosponsor the bills of other members of Congress who do not cosponsor Boozman’s own bills."

And this likely explains why John Boozman, since he took office in January, 2001 (nearly nine years ago), has successfully enacted just three bills into law. And all three named post offices in our district.

Medicare

Also in this week's update from our Congressman appears a link to a November 19th press release. In that release, our congressman appropriately points out that the rates at which doctors are reimbursed for medical treatment under Medicare are too low to recover their costs of providing care, forcing many physicians to decline accepting Medicare patients.

It's curious, though, that Congressman Boozman fails to mention that those same unsustainably low reimbursement rates apply to TriCare, the program that insures our nation's approximately 1.8 million brave men and women who made a career of military service. They often have a difficult time finding physicians who will accept TriCare for the same reason.

He states, "I look forward to continuing my work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to finally craft a legislative proposal that [fixes the reimbursement rate problem]."

One is again left to wonder why our congressman is "looking forward to continuing [his] work" instead of *doing* the work, by introducing legislation that fixes problems instead of waiting for others to do so.

And to the problem at hand, we have to wonder where he is on sponsoring real legislation to fix the biggest problem in healthcare: Tort reform.

We found it interesting to hear a report that at a recent forum, Congressman Boozman was asked why tort reform wasn't moving forward. We are told his response was something along the lines of "We don't have enough Republicans to push it through." The questioner reportedly followed up with "Why wasn't it passed when the Republicans had a majority in Congress?" We are told there was no meaningful answer.

We offer this as a possible explanation: In the 2008 election cycle alone, lawyers and law firms, as political action committees and as individuals, donated over \$233 million dollars to candidates for federal office, including the nice share of \$14,500 to Congressman Boozman himself! (Source: Opensecrets.org)

Is it any wonder that tort reform eludes us, when our elected officials are willingly accepting large donations from those who vigorously oppose it?

A suggestion for our congressman: Lead now, and introduce legislation calling for tort reform. Don't be a follower. And stop accepting corporate PAC donations!

Until next week...

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Bernie Skoch". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Bernie Skoch