



# Todd Platts

U.S. Congress, 19th District

Adams County District Office  
22 Chambersburg St., Gettysburg, PA 17325  
(717) 338-1919

Cumberland County District Office  
59 W. Louthier St., Carlisle, PA 17013  
(717) 249-0190

York County District Office  
2209 E. Market St., York, PA 17402  
(717) 600-1919

Washington, D.C. Office  
2455 Rayburn HOB, Washington DC 20515  
(202) 225-5836

Toll-free Phone: 1-877-902-1919  
Web site: [www.house.gov/platts](http://www.house.gov/platts)

*Todd R. Platts*  
M.C.  
PRSR-STD

Congressional  
Update

Don't miss the  
Town Meeting  
schedule below!

Summer 2010

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



Dear Friend,

I hope this letter finds you doing well. As always, I am pleased to update you on the recent actions of the U.S. House of Representatives. I encourage you to contact one of my offices listed above if you have any questions regarding the issues discussed in this newsletter or there is a federal matter for which my staff and I can be of assistance.

I hope you will plan to attend one of my upcoming town meetings. The dates, times, and locations of the meetings are located below. I look forward to engaging discussions at the meetings about the many challenges facing our nation. Your input is always greatly welcomed and will be well considered.

In closing, please join me in keeping our troops and their families in your thoughts and prayers. But for the selfless service of these true American heroes, the freedoms we enjoy every day would not be. God bless them, their loved ones, and our great nation!

Sincerely,

Todd Russell Platts

## House Fails to Adopt Budget

Just as determining the family budget is one of the most important financial decisions that all families must make, one of the most important responsibilities of Congress is annually passing a budget for the federal government. The Democratic Chairman of the House Budget Committee once put it this way: "If you can't budget, you can't govern." The annual Congressional budget resolution – which sets discretionary spending caps, tasks committees with producing deficit-reduction legislation in their respective areas, and projects federal budget deficits over the next five years – is one of the most important tools available to Congress for bringing the deficit under control.

Unfortunately, the Majority Leader of the House of Representatives has now announced that the House this year will not consider a budget resolution. This is the **first time** since the current budget rules were put in place in 1974 that the House has not voted on a budget. While the House and Senate have failed to agree upon a final budget in a handful of years (1998, 2002, 2004, and 2006), the House has always ultimately chosen to adopt its own budget resolution.

The lack of a budget resolution this year is a glaring admission that there is no plan in place in Washington to get spending and deficits under control. According to Representative Paul Ryan, Ranking Member of the House Budget Committee, non-defense discretionary spending – when you include the stimulus – has increased by an unbelievable 84%. Furthermore, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) states that total spending as a share of the economy has increased from a historic average of approximately 20% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to 25%. Yet, the spending has not been effective at reigniting economic growth. The budget deficit has ballooned from hundreds of billions of dollars to \$1.4 trillion. The federal government is borrowing 40 cents for every dollar spent. The total national debt is on track to equal nearly 90% of GDP by the year 2020.

I am a cosponsor of a number of proposals aimed at getting our fiscal house back in order. These proposals include bills to: cancel the so-called "TARP" program and rescind unspent stimulus funds (H.R. 3140); hold government-sponsored enterprises Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac accountable to the taxpayer (H.R. 4889 and H.R. 4653); and, sunset ineffective or wasteful federal programs and agencies (H.R. 393). In addition, I have joined with my Republican colleagues in trying to force votes on other specific spending cuts and savings – including votes on whether to eliminate a new welfare program that does not require able-bodied recipients to work (\$2.5 billion), whether to sell excess federal property that is no longer needed (\$15 billion), and whether to scrap plans to hire thousands of additional IRS agents to enforce the new health care law (\$5-10 billion). The House majority used a parliamentary tactic called "ordering the previous question," however, to block a direct vote on each of these deficit reduction proposals.

Lacking the discipline to say "no" to just about any spending, Congress has chosen instead to abdicate its most basic governing responsibility - enacting a budget resolution that will put us back on the path of fiscal responsibility and deficit reduction. Congress must have the discipline to say "no" if we are going to reverse current trends in spending and debt. The decisions that must be made will not always be easy, but neither are the budgetary decisions that families across the nation have to make every day.



*Better Nutrition for Kids – The Improving Nutrition for America's Children Act (H.R. 5504) will provide nutritious meals and improve health standards for our nation's children. I was pleased to join with (from left to right), U.S. Rep. George Miller (CA-7), U.S. Rep. Rosa DeLauro (CT-3), television host and child nutrition advocate Rachael Ray, and U.S. Rep. Carolyn McCarthy (NY-4), in announcing this important legislation which passed the House Education and Labor Committee on July 15.*

## Town Meeting Schedule

Tuesday, September 7

**Rose Fire Company #1**  
200 East Main Street  
New Freedom  
9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

Tuesday, September 7

**Manchester Township  
Municipal Building**  
3200 Farmtrail Road  
York  
7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Wednesday, September 8

**Hampden Twp. Emergency  
Services Building - North**  
1200 Good Hope Road  
Mechanicsburg  
7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Thursday, September 9

**Citizens' Hose Fire  
Company # 1**  
109 South Baltimore St.  
Dillsburg  
1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Thursday, September 9

**Gettysburg Fire  
Department**  
35 North Stratton Street  
Gettysburg  
7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

# Responding to the Gulf Oil Spill

The BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico is a tragedy on many levels – a horrific loss of life, an unparalleled environmental crisis, and a staggering economic impact. The first and most important priority is permanently stopping the leak. Ultimately, we must determine what caused this catastrophic leak, delineate what actions must be taken to best prevent a similar tragedy in the future, and ensure that BP fulfills its responsibilities regarding the clean-up of and recovery from this disaster.

Various legislative proposals are working their way through Congress in response to the BP spill. For example, S. 3473 authorizes advances from the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund in order to ensure that the Coast Guard's response to the spill continues unimpeded. The oil industry pays into the Trust Fund and the party responsible for the spill – BP in this case - is liable for replenishing any expenditure made by the Trust Fund. President Barack Obama signed S. 3473 into law on June 15.

As we move forward, Congress and the Administration must act responsibly and thoughtfully. The oil spill should not be used as an excuse to rush through unrelated measures that have nothing to do with what happened. Legislation that sends manufacturing jobs overseas – as so-called “cap and trade” legislation will do – will ultimately harm our economy and the environment alike. We instead need long-term sensible efforts to promote conservation, develop alternative and renewable energy supplies, and recover traditional domestic sources of energy in an environmentally-responsible manner.



*Training Future Nurses – During a recent visit to the HACC - York Campus, (from left to right) Nursing Coordinator Lizann Brickell, Student Nursing*

*Organization President Jamie Kirchner and Nursing Coordinator Judy Rahausser provided me with a demonstration of the college's new simulated, remote-control operated patient used to train nursing students in managing patient care.*



*A Day On, Not a Day Off – As co-chair of the House National Service Caucus, I met Penn State York students who participated in the annual Martin Luther*

*King, Jr. Day of Service at Crispus Attucks. As the sponsor of House Resolution 1002, which encourages the honoring of Dr. King's legacy through service to others, I was especially pleased to join with the Penn State York students and other citizens participating in various volunteer activities. H. Res. 1002 passed the House on January 13.*

## House Passes Bill to Eliminate Government Waste

At a time when the national debt is over \$13 trillion, it has never been more apparent that the federal government must spend taxpayer dollars wisely. One of the reasons we find ourselves in such substantial debt today is that federal programs, ineffective or not, never end. Taxpayer-funded programs must be monitored to ensure that they are presenting clear results. Those programs that are not performing effectively must be reformed or eliminated.

On June 16, the United States House of Representatives approved bipartisan legislation (H.R. 2142) - the Government Efficiency, Effectiveness and Performance Improvement Act – without objection. Representative Henry Cuellar and I introduced H.R. 2142 earlier this Congress. This bill is similar to legislation that I first introduced in 2004 as the Chairman of the

House Subcommittee on Government Management, Finance, and Accountability (H.R. 3826).

H.R. 2142 requires that all federal agencies work with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to clearly identify outcome-based goals for their programs and then submit an action plan to achieve said goals. Agencies will be required to conduct quarterly performance assessments outlining how effectively they are working to meet their stated goals. These assessments will be made available to Congress and the American people. H.R. 2142 also requires the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to evaluate whether federal programs are providing direct value to taxpayers. H.R. 2142 is now pending consideration in the Senate.

## Assistance is Just a Phone Call or Click Away

Constituent service is one of the most important roles of every Congressional office. My staff and I stand ready to answer your questions and help resolve matters pertaining to the federal government. While we cannot direct a federal agency to resolve your case in a specific manner, we can help to ensure that your case receives full, fair, and timely consideration. Additionally, answers to many of your questions may be found on my official web site ([www.house.gov/platts](http://www.house.gov/platts)). Simply click on the “Helping You” tab to see a list of subjects, such as Medicare, financial aid to students, and veterans benefits.

My office also provides other services, such as: requesting a United States flag be flown over the Capitol Building, providing House Gallery Passes for you to watch the House of Representatives in session, and submitting requests to the White House Visitors Center for tours of the White House. To read more about these and other services, simply click on the “Visiting D.C.” link on my web site.

If you are specifically interested in learning more about legislation moving through Congress, I encourage you to visit my web site and sign up for my monthly E-Newsletter. The E-Newsletter is e-mailed to subscribers periodically to discuss House votes and other legislative activity, as well as to alert constituents about town hall meetings and other items that may be of interest to you.

Additionally, the Minority Leader of the House has launched a new “America Speaking Out” web site intended to increase the dialogue between Americans and Congress ([www.americaspeakingout.com](http://www.americaspeakingout.com)). So far, approximately one-half million Americans have visited the web site and more than 10,000 ideas have been posted and debated. Please visit the “America Speaking Out” web site if you want to take advantage of this opportunity to engage in an unprecedented policy forum.

## New Health Care Law is the Wrong Solution

On Sunday, March 21, the House of Representatives voted to pass a health care bill consisting of more than 2,400 pages. The final vote to pass the health care bill in the House was 219 in favor, 212 opposed. President Barack Obama signed the measure into law on March 23.

I joined 211 colleagues – including 34 Democrats – in voting against the new health care legislation. All Members of Congress agree that the status quo in health care is unacceptable and that we should act to make affordable, quality health care accessible to all Americans. The legislation enacted into law, however, is the wrong solution. Once fully implemented, the new health care law is expected to cost more than \$2 trillion, cut the Medicare program by \$500 billion, increase the cost of health insurance premiums for millions of Americans, and increase taxes by close to \$600 billion. The bill's provisions will continue to drive up health care costs and have a negative impact on job creation and economic growth.

Many of the major provisions of the new law will not be implemented until 2014. These major provisions include: the creation of state-based health insurance “exchanges”; a tax penalty on employers for employees who obtain their health insurance through an exchange (up to \$3,000 per employee); and, a tax penalty for every individual who does not obtain health insurance through either their employer or an exchange (the greater of \$695 or 2.5% of income).

Other provisions begin prior to 2014. These provisions include: cuts to the Medicare Advantage program; cuts in Medicare reimbursements for lab services, ambulance services, and wheelchair purchases; an increase in Medicare taxes; a new 2.3% tax on medical devices such as wheelchairs and pacemakers; a ban on purchasing over-the-counter medications out of Health Savings Accounts and Flexible Spending Accounts; a \$2,500 limitation on contributions to Flexible Savings Accounts; an increase in the threshold for deducting out-of-pocket medical costs on income tax forms from 7.5% to 10% of income; and, a 10% tax on indoor tanning. Beginning in 2018, a new 40% tax will be imposed on employer-provided health insurance plans valued at more than \$10,200 for an individual or \$27,500 for a family. The thresholds are indexed for inflation but not health care costs, which will result in more-and-more plans being taxed over time.

Instead of passing the new health care law, Congress should have enacted common sense health care reforms that would have immediately lowered costs and likely received bipartisan support. Such common sense reforms include small business health insurance pools, medical malpractice liability reform, tax credits and deductions for health care expenses, allowing young adults to remain on their parents' plans, and insurance reforms addressing the issues of pre-existing conditions and wrongful coverage termination.

Multiple proposals have been introduced to repeal the new health care law and replace it with better health care reforms such as those cited above. These bills, including H.R. 4972 and H.R. 5424, are currently languishing in committee and unlikely to be allowed a vote by the House leadership during the remainder of the current session. However, efforts to repeal said law and adopt reforms that truly lower health care costs and empower patients will continue to be strongly advocated for by many members of Congress, including me.



*Ryan with a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition and a U.S. flag and to visit with their parents, David and Tina Malamphy, pictured above.*

*Twin Eagles – Boy Scout Troop 24 participated in a special ceremony recently as twin brothers (pictured from left to right) Devin and Ryan Malamphy of Glen Rock were both promoted to the rank of Eagle Scout. I was pleased to present both Devin and*



*Honoring Our Veterans – Since 2007, students from Mechanicsburg Middle School have helped organize the Honor Bus program, which is dedicated to taking local World War II veterans to Washington, D.C. to visit the World War II Memorial. As a member of the House Armed Services Committee, I spoke with the group prior to their departure, thanking the students for their hard work and inspiration, and thanking the veterans for their heroic service to our nation.*

## Federal Government Needs to Control the Border and Enforce Our Immigration Laws

A national debate has erupted over a new Arizona law seeking to crack down on illegal immigration. Under the new law, Arizona law enforcement officials are required to check the immigration status of any person lawfully stopped, detained, or arrested in the state if the person does not have a valid form of government-issued identification, such as a driver's license, and there is “reasonable suspicion” based on something other than the individual's race that the person is an illegal alien. Passage of the Arizona law has resulted in the United States Department of Justice filing suit against the state of Arizona on July 6.

Rather than suing Arizona or any other state attempting to enforce our nation's immigration laws and to protect its citizens, the better response would have been for the federal government to seriously embrace its responsibility to secure the border. I am a cosponsor of House of Representatives Bill 3308 (H.R. 3308), the Secure America Through Verification and Enforcement (SAVE) Act. The SAVE Act would help to eliminate illegal immigration through a combination of border enforcement, employment verification, and interior enforcement. Specifically, H.R. 3308 would mandate 8,000 additional Border Patrol agents, employ more Immigration and Customs Enforcement investigators, train local and state law enforcement officials in immigration enforcement, and make mandatory the existing E-Verify employment eligibility verification program to crack down on employers who knowingly hire illegal workers.

The SAVE Act is currently pending consideration in multiple House Committees, including Homeland Security, Judiciary, and Education and Labor. Companion legislation has been introduced in the Senate (S. 1505). Both chambers of Congress should make passage of this legislation or a similar bill aimed at controlling our borders and enforcing immigration laws a top priority.

## New Approaches Needed to Boost the Economy

In my last “Congressional Update,” I noted that the most important domestic issue facing the United States today is the state of the economy. The national unemployment rate then was around 10% - where it largely remains today. Helping the private sector to create jobs and restoring the economy to full strength must be of the highest priority for Congress. Unfortunately, the approach in Washington instead has been to keep doing the same thing over-and-over again while expecting a different result.

In recent months, the House of Representatives has voted on a financial reform bill legislatively codifying the “too big to fail” policy that has wrongly guided the government’s response to the ongoing recession from the beginning (H.R. 4173). The bill creates a perpetual bail-out authority for the Department of Treasury and thereby provides an unfair competitive advantage to large financial firms that are given a taxpayer-backed bailout guarantee over smaller firms not provided said guarantee. The House has also voted for \$30 billion in what effectively amounts to additional “TARP” funding for banks (H.R. 5297). Proponents argued that the legislation would encourage small business lending. Unfortunately, the bill provides banks with more of a blank check, failing once again to require that the taxpayer funding be lent out to small businesses. Perhaps most surprising, the House voted for additional “stimulus” spending (H.R. 4213) – despite the fact that not all of the original stimulus funds have even been spent and despite a record high budget deficit. This additional deficit spending will harm the economy, not help it.

H.R. 4173, H.R. 5297 and H.R. 4213 passed the full House by votes of 237-192, 241-182, and 215-204 respectively. H.R. 5297 and H.R. 4213 are pending further consideration in the Senate. H.R. 4173 passed the Senate on July 15 and has been signed into law by President Barack Obama.

I voted against each of the bills discussed above because I believe they reflect the same failed policies that Congress and the President have embraced repeatedly since the ongoing recession began. A new, more fiscally responsible approach is needed. Congress should make tax incentives for work and investment permanent and, as discussed elsewhere in this newsletter, bring out-of-control federal spending under control. The new health care law – costing \$2 trillion and certain to further raise the cost of health care - should be replaced with health care reforms that are truly about reducing costs and fixing what is broken in our current system. The nation needs a comprehensive energy policy that is actually about energy independence, and we must crack down on unfair trade practices by China while also working to promote American exports. Such policies – completely different from what we have been doing and truly aimed at growing the private sector rather than the public sector – stand the best chance of dramatically stimulating our economy and putting Americans back to work.

## Iran Sanctions Enacted into Law

On June 24, the House of Representatives voted to pass the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act (H.R. 2194) by a margin of 408 to 8. The Senate passed said bill unanimously and President Barack Obama signed the measure into law on July 1.

I cosponsored H.R. 2194 and voted in favor of its passage. The legislation broadens and strengthens existing laws that sanction companies doing business with Iran in two ways. First, H.R. 2194 requires the President to impose a variety of penalties on companies that knowingly invest in the Iranian petroleum industry. The Iranian regime depends on crude oil to financially underwrite its government. However, the country actually has to import gasoline due to a lack of domestic refining capacity. The Iranian regime is therefore seeking foreign investors to help build more domestic refineries. Second, H.R. 2194 provides federal authority for state and local governments to divest their pension plans from businesses involved in the Iranian energy sector. Without this authority, the governments who engage in divestiture could be subject to shareholder lawsuits.

The enactment of H.R. 2194 is critically important to America’s national security. The Iranian regime is a state sponsor of terrorism and continues to aggressively pursue the development of nuclear weapons. The sanctions contained in H.R. 2194, if properly implemented, are a tool that can be used to deter the regime’s current course of conduct.

## Earmark Moratorium Promotes Fiscal Responsibility

On March 11, House Republicans met to debate the issue of so-called “earmarks” inserted into appropriations bills to fund specific projects. I advocated for and supported a unilateral ban on earmarks ultimately adopted by the full House Republican Conference. This ban was an important first step towards reforming the earmark process and fundamentally improving the way Congress spends taxpayer funds.

Earmarks at times fund worthy endeavors. However, all too often earmarked projects nationally have not been appropriate recipients of taxpayer dollars and receive minimal public scrutiny prior to passage. Moreover, there continues to be far too many earmarks - more than 11,000 in fiscal year 2010 alone. In a time of trillion dollar deficits, such unaccountable expenditures of taxpayer funds is fiscally irresponsible.

I have long been an advocate for reforming an earmark process that the American people well understand is broken. Since my first term in Congress, I have sponsored legislation to provide line-item veto authority for the President to eliminate “pork-barrel” spending. I have also supported legislation intended to make the earmark process more open and accountable. During the last and current sessions of Congress, I joined with like-minded colleagues in pushing for legislation (H. Con. Res. 263 and H. Con. Res.

201) which would have imposed an immediate moratorium on earmarks – for all Members of both parties - while a bipartisan Joint Committee on Earmark Reform worked to recommend improvements to the appropriations process.

The unilateral moratorium imposed on earmarks by House minority members this session helps to highlight the issues of accountability and costs related to earmarks. It is a down-payment for reforming the earmark process and a spur to encourage all members of Congress, regardless of party affiliation, to support reform. The preliminary results are encouraging. The first appropriations bill considered this year – the Fiscal Year 2011 appropriations bill for the Department of Homeland Security – has 50% fewer earmarks this year than last year. Part of this reduction is due to House minority members not submitting requests. However, even Democratic members received 20% fewer earmarks.

It is still early in the appropriations process. The House typically considers 12 or more appropriations bills every year. Each of these bills then must pass the Senate as well. Nonetheless, I am hopeful that the unilateral ban will ultimately be a win for taxpayers, both in the short-term and the long-term, resulting in taxpayer funds being spent in a more open, accountable, and responsible manner.