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January 18, 2013

Rep. Petri's E-Newsletter



Keep Current With Issue Updates

Would you like to be notified about key votes and activities in the House of Representatives? You can sign up to receive periodic updates on issues of interest to you, such as agriculture, health care or energy by [clicking here](#).

Teetering on the Fiscal Cliff

After incredible, economy-damaging fuss and delay, Congress and the President started the New Year with an agreement to postpone the "fiscal cliff." Aspects of the fiscal cliff were avoided, but others, particularly spending cuts, were delayed for another two months. [Read more here](#).

What I've Been Up To

The end of 2012 brought about many changes to the tax code, sequestration, and other budget matters. As part of the defense authorization, I was able to have some important provisions passed to improve the Troops to Teachers Program and correct an error to allow certain Wisconsin National Guard troops to receive backpay they are owed. [Read more here](#).

Town Meetings Coming in February

The 6th District has changed, and I will be traveling throughout our region meeting with residents from all parts of the [new 6th District](#) to listen to your views and discuss the most important issues facing Congress. Dates and locations will be released shortly and will be posted on my website in the coming weeks. But mark down the **week of February 16** on your calendar, and I will send out a complete list once all the meetings are set. Hope to see you there!



The Cranberry Debate

Rep. Petri discusses the difference between "added sugar" and "residual sugar" in the debate about proposed regulations that would characterize cranberry products as "unhealthy" because sugar is added to them.

In case you missed it...

- On January 16, Chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Bill Shuster [named me Chairman of the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit](#).
There's a lot that needs to be done, and I look forward to working with him and the committee to improve our highways and transit systems and to maintain a first-class transportation network.
- In December, [I introduced the Earnings Contingent Education Loans Act](#), in order to make it easier for students to repay college loans and to make the repayment process more accountable and fair. [Bloomberg News wrote about the bill](#), and the issue of student loan debt will certainly be a topic of conversation in the 113th Congress. I plan to reintroduce this bill in the coming weeks.
- Tax reform is still on the minds of many and will likely be discussed in the 113th Congress. Some things to keep in mind that were among the analysis and recommendations from the National Taxpayer Advocate in their [2012 Annual Report to Congress](#) were:
 - It takes U.S. taxpayers (both individuals and businesses) more than *6.1 billion hours* to complete tax filings.
 - Roughly *9 out of 10 Americans* rely on paid professionals or commercial software to prepare their tax returns (nearly 60 percent of taxpayers hire paid preparers; another 30 percent use software).
 - The current budget crisis and recurring continuing resolutions exacerbates the complexity and inefficiency of the tax system.
- Here's some of the other [major votes](#) that took place recently and how I voted.

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