



TOM LATHAM - TRUSTED LEADERSHIP FOR IOWA



**Report on the 110th Congress
Accomplishments of
Congressman Tom Latham**

Paid for by Latham for Congress

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Listening

“We may not agree with Congressman Latham on every issue – but we know that whenever we want to talk to him about any issue he makes the time to sit down and personally listen to us.” – Iowa Farmers Union President when introducing Congressman Latham at their 2008 Convention.

Congressman Tom Latham’s Action For Iowa Community Town Meetings serve as a community forum for Iowans to freely speak their minds. They are an open format which features discussions on the topics being addressed in Congress and those issues important to Iowans and their families.

Known as one of the most accessible members of congress, Congressman Latham has held 472 town meetings with Iowans. The meetings are open to any resident of Iowa’s Fourth Congressional District.

Congressman Latham also hosted the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture for an open town meeting during the new Farm Bill discussions to give Iowans an opportunity to discuss their views and concerns directly with the Secretary.

Congressman Latham's telephone town meetings are a new and innovative approach to compliment the traditional town meetings he holds each year throughout Iowa.

Due to new technology, Congressman Latham is able to conduct listening and discussion sessions with Iowans over the telephone. He is able to talk with you and other Iowan's and listen to your views on current issues all while taking your questions when you are in the comfort of your own home.

Congressman Latham knows that people lead busy lives these days and these telephone meetings are a great resource for Iowans who cannot participate in a traditional meeting due to scheduling conflicts, logistics, or mobility issues, to personally provide him with their comments, views and questions.

When a telephone town meeting is held you will hear a brief introductory message from Congressman Latham when you answer your telephone. A simple push of a button on the phone allows participants to instantly transfer to the live town meeting.

Unlike a simple one-sided conference call, those who opt-in to the town meeting can participate by asking questions and offering comments directly to Congressman Latham.

OPEN DOOR POLICY – Congressman Latham has a strict open door policy for any Iowan who wants to meet with him in Iowa or in Washington. Additionally, new teleconferencing technology between his district offices gives Iowans and groups who might only be able to meet during times when Congress is in session the option of staying at home and talking to the Congressman “face to face”. This is a tool he has also used to implement his Congress in the Classroom program where every school classroom in the district can link to his Washington, DC Office to learn more about the U.S. Congress and pose direct questions to Congressman Latham.

RESPONSIVE – In the 110th Congress, Congressman Latham has responded to over 48,000 constituent letters, emails and phone calls and handled over 2,000 casework requests.

Two examples of contacts to the Congressman’s Office that led to specific legislation are:

Latham authored H.R. 2563, to rename the post office in Marshalltown for Iowa Army National Guard Soldier Scott Nisely. Nisely, who was a Marshalltown resident and a Postal Service employee at the office, was killed in an ambush while serving in Iraq on Sept. 30, 2006. Both the Iowa National Guard and the Marshalltown Post Office had sought help from the Congressional Delegation. Latham was the first to introduce legislation and work with the Democratic leadership to usher it through the House on June 18, 2008. The measure was signed into law on August 9, 2007, (Public Law No: 110-71).

Congressman Latham also authored H.R. 1115 and House Concurrent Resolution 175, allowing caretakers to access death gratuity benefits to care for the children of fallen service members who were single parents. This would correct an unintended consequence of previous law that left such children without access to the death benefits until reaching the age of 18. These measures were prompted from a call the Congressman received from a family of a fallen soldier in the district.

Congressman Latham led the effort in the House to allow service members to set aside all or part of the death gratuity for the care of their children. A similar provision was enacted as section 645 of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY08, on January 28, 2008. Since the provision did not address past deaths, Congressman Latham authored House Concurrent Resolution 175, which was passed in both the House and Senate. The resolution encouraged courts to allow families of fallen service members to access death benefits according to any clear instructions left by the service member, helping at least one Iowa family struggling financially as the result of the legal loophole.

Health Care

Congressman Latham believes all Americans should have access to health care they can afford, and that Democrats and Republicans should work together to make health care more universal, accessible, affordable and economically sustainable in the United States. As part of this national discussion Congressman Latham is offering some of his own solutions that are based on input gathered from Iowans, making sure their voice is heard in Washington.

Health Care Legislation Authored by Congressman Latham –

H.R. 6652, the Nurses Higher Education and Loan Repayment Act. This legislation is a long-term solution addressing the growing nursing shortage faced by Iowa and the nation.

SUMMARY: The measure’s key provision provides student loan repayment for nurses who earn a graduate degree and commit to serve as faculty members—a powerful incentive not currently available to nurses considering this career.

BACKGROUND: Congressman Latham’s legislation has been endorsed by more than 44 nursing organizations in the United States, including the American Nurses Association (ANA), the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and the Iowa Hospital Association.

Iowa has a nursing shortage of over 8% of the number needed throughout the state, according to the Iowa Department of Public Health. That number is expected to jump to 27 percent in just over a decade. Nationally there is a shortage of more than 200,000 registered nurses—a number that is projected to grow to over one million by the year 2020.

Congressman Latham sought to build a solution by teaming up with Iowa nursing and health care professionals through a series of open roundtables around the state to listen to their unique perspective and input on what is needed. He then wrote legislation and teamed up with Wisconsin Democratic Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin to introduce the bill in the United States House.

H.R. 6699, the Health Care Security for All Americans Act. This legislation contains a list of provisions that are vital first steps to ensure that

all Americans have access to affordable quality health care. It has a heavy focus on the needs of rural states like Iowa.

SUMMARY: The majority of the uninsured and underinsured are either self-employed or work for employers that cannot afford to provide them with adequate health care. H.R. 6699 includes insurance market reforms that establish Small Business Health Plans (SBHPs), which would allow small businesses to join together nationwide to negotiate for lower health insurance premiums. Additionally, the bill allows a personal income tax deduction for all health insurance premiums paid on behalf of an individual taxpayer, the taxpayer's spouse, and dependents – available whether or not a taxpayer itemizes deductions. This equalizes the tax treatment of individual and employer-sponsored coverage. This is necessary because many Americans do not have the opportunity to access employer-sponsored coverage and the tax subsidies that make it more affordable.

Also included in this legislation are provisions that would put a permanent end to the geographic inequities in Medicare payments faced by Iowa health care providers, who currently pay a penalty for practicing efficient medicine and providing quality care. Addressing geographic inequity is critical to the future health security and access to care for all Iowa citizens, as many health care providers are currently leaving for other states where reimbursement is more adequate.

H.R. 1426, the Veterans Access to Local Health Care Options and Resources (VALOR) Act. This legislation gives Veterans the option of accessing health care from local health care providers rather than travel long distances to VA facilities.

SUMMARY: The VALOR Act would allow veterans enrolled in the VA health care system to receive the same VA-funded care at a local hospital or physician's office that they would otherwise be eligible to receive in a VA facility.

BACKGROUND: In rural states like Iowa, veterans often have to travel long distances to VA medical facilities to receive the health care promised to them. Congressman Latham spoke with many Iowa veterans who talked about the need to give up a full day, sometimes in fragile condition, to travel for care at VA facilities. Additionally, they told Congressman Latham they sometimes have to wait months for an appointment.

The gap in care for rural veterans is likely to increase dramatically in coming years. Due to increased deployment of National Guard and Reserve units, combat veterans will increasingly be dispersed in rural areas, far from large urban centers or concentrations of veterans where VA facilities tend to be located. The fact remains that not all of America's veterans have equal access to VA services.

Latham's VALOR Act addresses access problems by expanding the existing VA-operated health financing program known as fee-basis care. The VA has specific statutory authority to contract with non-VA facilities for medical care, but current law severely restricts its use. The VALOR Act lifts the restriction thus allowing veterans to receive care at a local hospital or physician's office that they would otherwise be eligible to receive in a VA facility. On April 26, 2007 the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health held a hearing on Latham's VALOR Act.

Congress took a vital step in this direction when it passed the Rural Veterans Access to Care Act, H.R. 1527, which is cosponsored by Congressman Latham. The bill was passed in the House and Senate, and cleared for the White House on September 30, 2008 as part of a larger veteran's measure, S. 2162. The legislation requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to implement a three-year pilot program to allow rural veterans in certain regions to receive VA-financed medical care from non-VA medical facilities in their own communities for the first time.

Key Health Care Legislation Supported by Congressman Latham –

Reforming the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). In 2007 Congressman Latham supported bipartisan House/Senate efforts to reform and extend the SCHIP program (H.R. 976 and H.R. 3963). He voted twice to override the veto of this legislation by President Bush. In addition to preventing shortfalls in state programs like the Iowa Hawk-I program, the bill provides resources to further reduce the number of uninsured by covering 3.8 million additional children. Congressman Latham voted in 1997 to create the original SCHIP program in order to help low-income children and to provide a health care safety net for families caught in a loophole of earning too much money to qualify for Medicaid, but not enough to afford private insurance for their children. Since then, the program has reduced the number of uninsured children by over one-third. However, the fact remains that nearly 70% of currently uninsured children are already eligible for Medicaid or SCHIP, and Congressman Latham supports efforts to enroll the remaining children.

H.R. 1553 – the Conquer Childhood Cancer Act. (Latham is a cosponsor). The bill requires the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to establish special programs of research excellence in the area of pediatric cancers and authorizes a grant for the operation of a population-based national childhood cancer database, the Childhood Cancer Research Network. **Became Public Law No: 110-285. 7/29/2008.**

H.R. 1157 – Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act (Latham is a cosponsor). The bill establishes multi-institutional, multi-disciplinary

research centers to study environmental factors potentially linked to the development of breast cancer. **This legislation has been presented to the President for his signature.**

H.R. 758 – Breast Cancer Patient Protection Act. (Latham is a cosponsor). Bans “drive through” mastectomies by requiring group health insurers to cover 48 hours of inpatient hospital stay following mastectomies and 24 hours following lymph node dissections. **This legislation passed in the House and awaits consideration in the Senate.**

H.R. 493 – Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act. (Latham is a cosponsor) Prohibits health insurance plans from discriminating in enrollment, eligibility, contribution rates, and premium rates based on genetic information. Makes it an unlawful for an employer to discriminate because of protected genetic information. This will enable greater participation in clinical trials for cancer treatments, among other benefits. **Became Public Law No: 110-233. 5/21/2008.**

H.R. 2295 – The ALS Registry Act. (Latham is a cosponsor). Authorizes \$25 million for the CDC for the creation of a national ALS registry for research, disease management and the development of standards of care. **This legislation has been presented to the President for his signature**

H.R. 1283 – Arthritis Prevention, Control, and Cure Act. (Latham is a cosponsor). Directs the Secretary of Health and Human Services to award competitive grants to national public and private entities to assist in the implementation of a national strategy for arthritis control and prevention. **This legislation passed in the House and awaits consideration in the Senate.**

H.R. 154 – Ending the Medicare Disability Waiting Period Act. (Latham is a cosponsor) The bill would phase out the 24-month waiting period for disabled individuals to become eligible for Medicare benefits, and eliminate the waiting period for individuals with life-threatening conditions.

H.R. 6270 – The Access, Compassion, Care, and Ethics for Seriously Ill Patients Act (The ACCESS Act). (Congressman Latham is an original cosponsor). The bill would create a new early approval system for drugs, biological products, and medical devices that is responsive to the needs of seriously ill patients. The “compassionate investigational access approval system” for drugs, biologics and devices would generally be for drugs that have passed Phase I trials. Such trials provide preliminary evidence that the product may be effective in treating a serious or life-threatening disease.

H.R. 507 - The Vision Care for Kids Act. (Latham is a cosponsor). The bill establishes a new federal grant program to help states provide

comprehensive eye examinations and treatment, by a licensed optometrist or ophthalmologist, for children who have been identified through a vision screening or eye examination as needing such services, with priority given to children who are under the age of 9.

H.R. 1926 - The Colon Cancer Screen for Life Act (Latham is a cosponsor). Increases Medicare reimbursement for colorectal cancer screening and diagnostic tests, and waives the Medicare deductible for such tests.

H.R. 1738 - Colorectal Cancer Prevention, Early Detection, and Treatment Act. (Latham is a cosponsor). Creates a program for colorectal cancer similar to the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection program through CDC.

HR 1279 - Direct Support Professionals Fairness and Security Act. (Latham is a cosponsor). Addresses the workforce shortage of personal assistants and home health aides by providing funds to increase wages paid to caregivers providing services to individuals with disabilities under the Medicaid program.

H.R. 748 – Medicare Access to Rehabilitation Services Act. (Latham is a cosponsor). Permanently repeals the annual cap on physical therapy services imposed on seniors under Medicare.

HR 1282 - The Medigap Access Improvement Act. (Latham is a cosponsor). Allows insurers to sell Medigap insurance policies to individuals under age 65 who have Medicare because they are disabled, which will lower out-of-pocket costs. Currently, these plans are only available to Medicare beneficiaries over the age of 65.

H.R. 2805 – the Medicare Medical Nutrition Therapy Amendment Act. (Latham is a cosponsor). Provides Medicare coverage for nutrition therapy services for seniors with pre-diabetes symptoms, in order to help prevent diabetes and renal failure.

H.R. 5604 – The Medicare Part D Home and Community Services Copayment Equity Act. (Latham is a cosponsor). Eliminates Medicare prescription drug copayments for seniors in assisted living and residential care settings who would otherwise be eligible for nursing home care under Medicare or Medicaid.

HR 5878 - Troops to Nurse Teachers Act. (Latham is a cosponsor). Modeled after the 1994 Troops to Teachers program, this legislation is aimed at increasing the number of nurse faculty members.

Congressman Latham Secured Iowa Health Care Funding Initiatives –

Marshalltown Medical and Surgical Center (Marshalltown): Latham sponsored funding for a revolutionary diagnostic imaging project at MMSC. The project would make it the first hospital in the world to tie high resolution medical imaging with large scale virtual reality imaging. Integration of virtual reality visualization and CT Scan data will greatly increase patient health literacy and safety, lead to a better understanding of health issues, give physicians greater insight into their patients and provide a faster and more accurate diagnosis.

Gunderson Lutheran Clinic (Decorah): Latham sponsored funding for installation of a remote fetal monitoring system that will allow the Gunderson health system to provide medical services to mothers in rural Northeast Iowa through the use of telemedicine technology that allows OB/GYN consultations. Many of the smaller, rural hospitals that will benefit from the system were previously unable to purchase the equipment necessary to ensure live, real-time consultations

Winneshiek Medical Center (Decorah): Latham sponsored funding for medical equipment for newly renovated emergency, laboratory, radiology, obstetrics and same-day services departments at the Winneshiek Medical Center in Northeast Iowa.

Midwest Rural Telemedicine Consortium (MRTC): Latham has secured funding over three years for a major project to connect rural communities in Iowa's District to health care providers via cutting edge telemedicine technology.

Education

Congressman Latham believes all individuals who desire a college education should be allowed to achieve that goal, and he has worked hard to fulfill his strong commitment to student aid throughout the past decade. The federal government currently provides over \$90 billion in resources for higher education student aid programs; this is nearly triple the investment from a decade ago. The federal investment, combined with private and institutional scholarships, has provided numerous opportunities for students to finance their higher educations. In fact, more people attend college today than ever before.

As a senior member of the House Appropriations Committee, Congressman Latham has worked diligently to make college education more accessible and affordable for all students by providing necessary funding.

Co-Chair of the Congressional Community College Caucus –

Iowa has a strong statewide system of 15 community colleges which guarantees Iowans the opportunities for educational advancement and career development regardless of previous educational attainment.

Congressman Latham has taken a leadership role on behalf of Iowa community colleges by leading the 200-plus member caucus of the U.S. House of Representatives to advocate for policies and funding on behalf of community colleges.

Education Legislation Authored by Congressman Latham –

H.R. 6652, the Nurses Higher Education and Loan Repayment Act.
This legislation addresses the growing nursing shortage faced by Iowa and the nation by providing student loan repayment for nurses who earn a graduate degree. *Find additional information about this legislation under health care accomplishments.*

Key Education Legislation Supported by Congressman Latham –

H.R. 4137- the Higher Education Reauthorization and College Opportunity Act.
This bill overhauled our nation's higher education laws, advancing key reforms that address the soaring price of college and removing other obstacles that make it harder for qualified students to go to college. *(Signed into law)*
[Provisions within H.R.4137](#)

Federal Pell Grants

The law raises the maximum authorized Pell Grant from \$6000 to \$8000 over the next six years and permits year-round grants.

Loan Forgiveness Program for Service in Areas of National Need

The program permits loan forgiveness of up to \$2,000 for each school year or calendar year of full time employment in area of national need, up to \$10,000 per borrower. Some areas of national need are early childhood educators, librarians, child welfare workers, school counselors, medical specialists, mental health professionals, applied sciences, technology & engineering or mathematics (STEM) employees.

Transparency in College Tuition for Consumers

This law creates a college affordability list for students to compare information on various colleges to find the best value.

Textbook Information

The law also requires that certain information such as price be provided to students with the course schedule.

In-State Tuition Rates for Armed Forces Members, Spouses, and Dependent Children

H.R. 4137 requires states to provide in-state tuition to members of the military and their dependents who have lived in a state for more than 30 days.

State Commitment to Affordable College Education

The law requires states to maintain at least level funding for higher education or risk losing some federal higher education funding.

H.R. 5740, the Post 9/11 Veterans Education Assistance Act.

Congressman Latham was an original cosponsor of this bi-partisan bill to completely overhaul and nearly double G.I. Bill education benefits for veterans. The bill closely resembles the educational benefits provided to veterans returning from the Second World War, and increases benefits to address the reality of rising tuition costs and increased deployment of National Guard and Reserve units. **This legislation was signed into law on June 30, 2008 as part of H.R. 2642, the Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2008.**

H.R. 5715 -The Ensuring Continued Access to Student Loans Act.

This bill was passed into law to help ensure liquidity in the student loan market. *(Signed into law)*

- Increases unsubsidized loan limits by \$2,000 for undergraduates, and aggregate limits to \$31,000 for dependents and to \$57,500 the limits for independent undergraduate students

- Creates an optional grace period for repayment of Parent PLUS loans while the student is in college.
- Allows the Secretary of Education to temporarily buy student loans as a last resort should the market liquidity crisis spread further into student loan securities.
- Allows the Department of Education to be a lender of last resort to entire institutions rather on an individual by individual basis.

Congressman Latham's Iowa Education Funding Initiatives –

Simpson College - Blank Performing Arts Center - Congressman Latham obtained funding for the expansion of the performing arts at Simpson which includes: increasing outreach efforts in children's theatre; expanding curriculum to offer technology-focused course work; hosting camps and festivals on campus and offering world-class facilities.

Waldorf College Science equipment for biology bachelors degree program - This funding obtained by Congressman Latham will assist in the purchase of science equipment and library resources to support the biology bachelors degree program.

Sustainable Energy Education Center equipment – Iowa Lakes Community College - Congressman Latham obtained funding which will be used to purchase and install laboratory equipment and other educational resources to support the sustainable energy education programs.

Special Olympics Education Activities - *Special Olympics Iowa* – Congressman Latham obtained funding to support the efforts to increase participation of individuals with intellectual disabilities and support the design and implementation of Special Olympics programs that can be integrated into classroom instruction.

Iowa State University – Over \$71 Million has been secured by Congressman Latham over the past four fiscal years. As a senior member of the House Appropriations Committee, Congressman Latham has worked closely with the leadership at Iowa State University to help bolster the institution's historic prominence and create opportunities for students in a broad range of high profile research.

Other Funding Initiatives for Iowa State University:

- ISU Internet Scale Event & Attack Generation Environment (ISEAGE) –This program that simulates technology cyber attacks for the purpose of researching cyber defense mechanisms.
- A program for risk assessment and mitigation for genetically modified agriculture products.

- The Northeast Iowa Dairy Education Initiative which carries out education and applied research activities in conjunction with state dairy farmers.
- The Midwest Poultry Consortium which engages in research on animal nutrition, waste management and animal welfare.
- Corn rootworm research projects.
- The Forensic Testing Center at the Ames Department of Energy Lab located on the ISU campus. The forensics program works with Iowa and other state and federal officials in seeking new forensics tools.
- The Food & Agriculture Policy Research Institute (FAPRI), of which ISU is a member, carries out international agriculture policy work oriented toward research on the impact of trade policy on agriculture policy.
- The Advanced Live, Virtual, and Constructive (LVC) Training Systems project will allow Iowa State University researchers to develop new training software in partnership with the U.S. Army.
- The New Vaccines to Fight Respiratory Infection project will allow a team of researchers at Iowa State University to develop unique vaccine delivery vehicles in partnership with the U.S. Army. The vehicles can be employed to combat a wide variety of respiratory pathogens that threaten military personnel, as well as protect animals from agro-terrorism involving airborne diseases.

Congressman Latham leads effort for increase in funding for Land Grant universities. For the past three years Congressman Latham has led the fight to increase the funding for different formula funding initiatives for Land Grant schools such as ISU. This includes funding for Hatch Act and other federal research funding provided to Land Grants each year.

Waldorf College- Teacher Preparation Library Materials - These funds secured by Congressman Latham will be used to acquire necessary library materials to support teacher preparation at Waldorf College in three major areas: theory and classroom practices, children and juvenile books and curriculum materials.

Iowa Department of the Blind - Implementation of the Digital Talking Book Service – Congressman Latham obtained funding to help the state transition, with the Library of Congress, to a new digital format by providing additional media and digital storage space.

Veterans-Military

No one has done more to secure our freedom than the veterans and military personnel. Congressman Latham has consistently fought to ensure that veterans and military personnel receive the benefits they deserve, and will continue to do so in the Congress.

For his work on health care issues for the National Guard and Reserve, Congressman Latham has received the following awards:

The Eagle Award, Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States.

The National Legislative Advocacy Award, Naval Reserve Association.

Award of Merit, The Military Coalition (veterans organizations representing over 5 million veterans and their families).

Defense and Veterans Legislation Authored by Congressman Latham –

H.R. 558 – The National Guard and Reserve Readiness and Retention Act. This legislation provides access to military health benefits for members of the National Guard and Reserve.

SUMMARY: Allows all Guard and Reserve members to purchase military health coverage for their families under the TRICARE program on a continuous basis. Previously, TRICARE was provided only while the member was deployed, leaving many families uninsured for most of the member's time in service. Congressman Latham led efforts in the House to pass this legislation, which culminated in the enactment of H.R. 558 as section 706 of H.R. 5122, the National Defense Authorization Act for FY07, on October 17, 2006. The new benefit became available October 1, 2007.

H.R. 1428 - The National Guard and Reserve Retirement Modernization Act. This legislation overhauls the reserve retirement system.

SUMMARY: Drafted in response to input received from members of the Iowa National Guard and other reservists throughout the country, the legislation narrows the gap between active duty and reserve retirement by allowing Guard and Reserve members to begin receiving retired pay earlier than age 60 if they had spent significant periods of time on deployments. Congressman Latham has led efforts in the House to reform the reserve retirement system. **H.R. 1428 was enacted as section 647 of H.R. 5185, the National Defense Authorization Act for FY08, on January 28, 2008.** Congressman Latham is now working with his colleagues to make the

changes retroactive to cover all who served following September 11, 2001, as was included in his original legislation.

H.R. 1426 - The Veterans Access to Local Health Care Options and Resources (VALOR) Act. The legislation would increase access to health care for rural veterans.

SUMMARY: The VALOR Act would allow veterans enrolled in the VA health care system to receive the same VA-funded care at a local hospital or physician's office that they would otherwise be eligible to receive in a VA facility. On April 26, 2007 the House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Health held a hearing on the VALOR Act at which Congressman Latham testified. H.R. 1426 currently has 13 bipartisan cosponsors, and the Congressman is working to build support for the bill. **(See full description in the Health Care section).**

H.R. 1115 and House Concurrent Resolution 175. This legislation helps children of fallen service members.

SUMMARY: This legislation corrects an unintended consequence of previous law that left children of fallen service members, who were single parents without access to death benefits until reaching the age of 18.

BACKGROUND: Congressman Latham led the effort in the House to allow service members to set aside all or part of the death gratuity for the care of their children. A similar provision was enacted as section 645 of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY08, on January 28, 2008. Since the provision did not address past deaths, Congressman Latham authored House Concurrent Resolution 175, which was passed in both the House and Senate. The resolution encouraged courts to allow families of fallen service members to access death benefits according to any clear instructions left by the service member, helping at least one Iowa family struggling financially as the result of the legal loophole.

Latham Defense and Veterans Initiatives –

Veterans' Health Clinic in Decorah, Iowa. Congressman Latham has led efforts to establish a VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic to serve veterans living in Northeastern Iowa. In February 2008 the Congressman wrote the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Director of the VA Midwest Health Care Network to support opening a veteran's clinic in Northeast Iowa. Congressman Latham also inserted language in H.R. 5658, the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Authorization and Lease Act of 2008, in which the House Veterans Affairs Committee instructed the Department of Veterans Affairs to strongly consider opening a veteran's health care clinic in the area.

The VA regional office has since determined that a VA clinic is needed in the Decorah area. **A plan has been approved for opening the clinic in the fall of next year. The plan is now under review by the Veterans Health Administration Central Office in Washington.** The application must go through a formal review process at the Department of Veterans Affairs, with final approval by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. A final decision is expected within 12 months and the earliest possible opening of the clinic, if approved, would be during the fall of 2009.

Funding for Research on War Injuries. Over 80% of war injuries suffered in combat involve the extremities. Congressman Latham has led efforts in the House to increase funding for vital research to improve treatment for injuries to the extremities. Congressman Latham authored letters to the leadership of the House Appropriations Committee beginning in February 2008, and convinced many of his colleagues to join him, in demanding a dramatic increase in funding for research on treating war injuries to the extremities suffered by veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. While the program had received \$4.8 million in funding for FY08, the Department of Defense had identified a series of vital peer-reviewed research projects that could go forward immediately if a dramatic funding increase of more than \$100 million were provided. **H.R. 2642, the Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2008, which was signed into law June 30, 2008, includes \$273.8 million for battle casualty research, including as much as \$50 million for extremity injury research. The FY09 Department of Defense Appropriations bill includes \$61 million for extremity injury research.** Congressman Latham continues to communicate with U.S. Army and congressional leaders to ensure that maximum funding is provided.

Construction of Iowa National Guard Facilities. Through his position as a senior member of the House Appropriations Committee, Congressman Latham has initiated several efforts to modernize Iowa National Guard facilities. Most recently, following a 5-year effort Congressman Latham secured funding in the FY09 Military Construction Appropriations bill for a much needed addition and remodeling at the Test Squadron in Fort Dodge. In FY06, he secured funding for renovation of Army National Guard vehicle maintenance facilities in Fort Dodge. In FY04, he secured funding for an addition to the Fort Dodge Readiness Center supporting the Headquarters of the 1st Battalion, 194th Field Artillery of the Iowa Army National Guard. In FY03, he secured funding for upgrades at Boone Readiness Center, making it a state of the art armory.

Key Defense and Veterans Legislation Supported by Congressman Latham –

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Care. Congressman Latham has supported appropriations legislation that has increased funding for VA medical care by over 100% since 2001.

H.R. 5740 – The Post 9/11 Veterans Education Assistance Act. (Latham is an original cosponsor). This bi-partisan bill completely overhauls and nearly doubles G.I. Bill education benefits for veterans. The bill closely resembles the educational benefits provided to veterans returning from World War II, and increases benefits to address the reality of rising tuition costs and increased deployment of National Guard and Reserve units. **This legislation was signed into law on June 30, 2008 as part of H.R. 2642, the Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2008.**

H.R. 6562- The Agent Orange Equity Act. (Latham is an original cosponsor). The bill amends federal law to clarify that service in Vietnam includes service in the waters offshore, its inland waterways and the airspace above Vietnam for the purposes of establishing a presumption of exposure to Agent Orange. This provides clarity to obscure language in the Agent Orange Act that has so far allowed the VA to deny disability claims filed by some navy veterans exposed to Agent Orange.

H.R. 5791 – The National Guard and Reserve Readiness Act. (Latham is an original cosponsor). Congressman Latham joined Congresswoman Shea-Porter (D-NH) and Senator Clinton (D-NY) in introducing this legislation as the lead Republican sponsor. This legislation provides access to TRICARE military health benefits for reservists up to one year ahead of their deployment date. Current law provides this at 90 days prior to deployment, which the Iowa National Guard has reported is often not enough time to take care of outstanding dental and medical issues that may be present. This can result in delayed deployment, or problems getting medical issues addressed in the field.

H.R. 1527 - The Rural Veterans Access to Care Act. (Latham is an original cosponsor). The bill requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to implement a three-year pilot program to pay for qualified veterans, enrolled in the VA health care system and living in rural areas, to receive VA-financed medical care from non-VA medical facilities in their own communities, similar to the VALOR Act. **H.R. 1527 was included in S. 2162, which passed in the House and Senate, and has been cleared for the White House.**

H.R. 2417 – GI Bill Second Chance Act. (Latham is a cosponsor). Allows military personnel who did not initially enroll in education benefits to sign up, during an annual enrollment period, after paying the required enrollment fee.

Currently, soldiers must either opt in when joining or be excluded from the program.

H.R. 3481 – Support for Injured Service Members Act. (Latham is a cosponsor). Implements the president’s Commission on Care for America’s Returning Wounded Warriors recommendation to allow up to six months leave for a family member of a service member who has a combat-related injury. This would effectively double FMLA leave for these individuals (current law allows three months).

H.R. 6185 – the TRICARE Continuity of Coverage for National Guard and Reserve Families Act. (Latham is a cosponsor). Would allow reserve retirees to purchase TRICARE coverage at government cost before they would otherwise become eligible for TRICARE coverage upon receiving reserve retirement benefits at age 60.

H.J.Res. 9 – the Flag Protection Amendment. (Latham is a cosponsor). Proposes an amendment to the Constitution of the United States authorizing the Congress to prohibit, by law, the physical desecration of the flag of the United States.

H.R. 303 – the Retired Pay Restoration Act. (Latham is a cosponsor). Allows retired, disabled veterans to receive full military retired pay and veterans disability compensation without offsets (currently, only veterans with high disability ratings receive full “concurrent receipt” of payments).

H.R. 1470 – the Chiropractic Care Available to All Veterans Act. (Latham is a cosponsor). Requires the VA to provide chiropractic care at half of its medical facilities by December 31, 2009, and all medical centers no later than December 31, 2011. Currently these services are only available at 20% of VA facilities. **Passed the House on May 23, 2007.**

Economic Development Initiatives

Congressman Latham Secured Economic Development Initiatives –

City of Humboldt – Frit Industries Brownfield Redevelopment

Successfully assisted, through federal funding, the City of Humboldt in its efforts to demolish and grade the former plant site in order to facilitate redevelopment. The 55 acre site will become a business park open to new industry supporting area employment.

Iowa Central Community College - Advanced Manufacturing Training Center – Congressman Latham obtained funding to assist in the purchase of a mobile lab, supplies, and to pay for salaries at the center. This assistance will help the center in meeting its goal to provide a link between Iowa Central Community College and the area manufacturing industries.

North Iowa Area Community College - Regional Economic Development Organization – Funds secured by Congressman Latham will assist the regional economic development organization accomplish its mission of marketing and recruitment of business and industry.

Midwest Center for Entrepreneurial Agriculture/Rural Entrepreneurship Incubator – Congressman Latham obtained funding for a project that will provide entrepreneurs with business development skills through two new business incubators.

Iowa Valley Community College District Education and Training Center: The funding secured by Congressman Latham will be used to expand vocational and job skill training opportunities in Marshalltown.

Small Business Issues

Over 65% of the nation's new jobs are created by small businesses. And, in Iowa almost 98% of employers are small businesses. Congressman Latham believes that is important that Congress do everything possible to support the businesses on Iowa's main streets.

Small Business Legislation Authored by Congressman Latham –

H.R. 731 - The National Small Business Regulatory Assistance Act – Congressman Latham introduced this legislation to level the current uneven playing field by providing regulatory compliance assistance through Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs). While SBDCs generally assist small businesses with financial, management and marketing activities, this legislation would create a pilot program through which SBDCs would provide free, confidential counseling on regulatory compliance and help small businesses gain access to regulatory information and resources.

H.R. 6699 - Small Business Health Plans (SBHPs). Congressman Latham has authored this legislation to allow small businesses to join together, nationwide, to negotiate for lower health insurance premiums, saving them thousands of dollars each year. Three out of every four small business employees would pay lower health insurance premiums under this bill than under current law, and many previously uninsured working Americans would receive coverage. Furthermore, according to the Congressional Budget Office, federal and state Medicaid spending would decline by nearly \$1.4 billion, as more employers would be able to provide health coverage.

Key Small Business Legislation Supported by Congressman Latham –

H.R. 989 - Innocent Sellers Fairness Act
This legislation establishes that sellers should only be held responsible in proportion to their wrongdoing and frees sellers from liability when they have done nothing wrong. The activity must be negligent and damages must be limited to those directly caused by the activity.

H.R. 3660 - Equity for Our Nation's Self-Employed Act

This legislation cosponsored by Congressman Latham seeks to allow self-employed individuals to deduct health insurance costs in computing the tax on self-employment income, thus giving them the same tax treatment that other businesses receive.

Small Business Awards received by Congressman Latham:

Guardian of Small Business – National Federation of Independent Business –
, Congress

Spirit of Enterprise Award – U.S. Chamber of Commerce – , 109th Congress

Champion of the Merit Shop – Associated Builders and Contractors – , ,
Congress

Thomas Jefferson Award – International Foodservice Distributors Association
– 2008 and 2007

Endorsement for re-election in 2008 by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Endorsement for re-election in 2008 by the National Federation of
Independent Business (NFIB)

2008 Midwest Floods

Severe storms and tornadoes significantly impacted the State of Iowa in late May and early June of 2008. The monetary damages to public and personal property were catastrophic. More importantly, the personal tragedies in people's lives cannot be calculated.

Congressman Latham worked with the House Appropriations Committee and others in the Iowa delegation in seeking disaster funding assistance across a broad scale of categories, including: Agriculture, Economic Development Assistance, Small Business Administration disaster assistance, FEMA assistance, Corps of Engineers funding and HUD Community Development Block Grant funding.

Early on, in the Iraq War Supplemental, a \$2.65B Disaster Assistance title was added. Congressman Latham worked with his colleagues to add funds in critical areas, including through his amendment to add funding for the FEMA Community Development Loan (CDL) Program. This program allows for reimbursements (for businesses and local governments) to account for certain lost revenues in natural disaster situations. For example, local utilities can obtain a percentage of lost revenues when the utility is not operating due to incapacity. This program is very important for small, locally-owned utilities and businesses. Latham also saw to it that the CDL program was given another \$102M in the most recent Disaster Supplemental passed in late September.

Agriculture

Key Agriculture Legislation Supported by Congressman Latham –

H.R. 2419, The Farm, Nutrition and Bioenergy Act of 2007

Congressman Latham supported the Farm Bill extension because it continues the safety net and conservation elements that are so important to Iowa agriculture. In addition, the bill contains payment limitations and was crafted with more thought and deliberation than the previous law, which Latham voted against.

Latham has been a champion for Land Grant universities by protecting Hatch Act funding from drastic cuts. The Land Grant system is critically important to rural America and Latham is committed to promoting and protecting its future.

Congressman Latham led a bi-partisan campaign to ensure that the Regional Environmental and Agriculture Programming Model (REAP) received adequate funding in the 1997 Farm Bill. REAP helps farmers, ranchers and rural small businesses produce clean energy, curb energy costs and boost economic development.

Latham led a bipartisan effort, by members who do not sit on the Agriculture Committee, in recommending the inclusion of guaranteed funding for agriculture research in the Farm Bill in order to maintain the vitality and growth of U.S. agriculture.

Trade

Free trade is critically important to Iowa farmers. As such, Congressman Latham supported and promoted free trade deals that would benefit Iowa's economy by creating new markets for Iowa products.

Advised the USDA and House Agriculture committees on U.S. farm policy and how it must be designed to maximize U.S. competitiveness in the global marketplace.

Congressman Latham has long supported programs, like Agribility, that are aimed at assisting physically disadvantaged farmers continue to farm.

Key Agriculture Funding Initiatives Secured by Congressman Latham –

- Agra-bility – obtained funding over last few years for this program that helps disabled farmers succeed in their farming operations
- Obtained funding for the Food Chain Economic Analysis, a program that assesses the technical and economic feasibility of food tracing systems for value-added food products.
- National Animal Disease Center—led the effort to construct this new Center, at a cost of \$460M over 4 years when the project was floundering because of inaction.
- Obtained funding over several years for the Northeast Iowa Dairy Education Initiative, which entails education and applied research activities in conjunction with state dairy farmers.
- For two years in a row, obtained funding for the National Veterinary Medical Service Act. The funds allow for a veterinary education loan repayment program.
- Over 3 years, obtained funding to capitalize a low-cost loan program for individually-owned water well construction and renovation for low-income individuals.
- Certified Environmental Management Systems for Agriculture (CEMSA) – obtained funding on behalf of Iowa Soybean Association for this program that helps farmers implement better environmental management plans in the area of fertilizers, pest control and soil management.
- Advanced Live, Virtual & Constructive Training Systems – Obtained funding for this virtual reality training initiative to help modernize US military training for the future.
- New Vaccines to Fight Respiratory Infection – Obtained funding for this vaccine research program aimed at diseases that can be used in agro-terrorism. The project studies and bio-genetics and other science areas that can be used to create the vaccines.
- Renewable Energy for America Program – led fight to increase this grant program which is the most significant renewable energy program for farmers and rural small businesses within the USDA funding structure.

Overall, and in addition to the above-Agriculture items, Congressman Latham has secured hundreds of thousands of dollars in agriculture research money that has benefited Iowa State University and all Iowa farmers.

Agriculture based endorsements of Tom Latham:

- Iowa Corn Grower's Association – Endorsement for re-election
- Iowa Farm Bureau "Friend of Agriculture"

Energy

Key Energy Legislation Supported By Congressman –

H.R. 6566 The American Energy Act (Latham is a cosponsor)

The American Energy Act takes an “all of the above” approach to high energy costs by promoting the use of wind, solar, biofuels, domestically-produced oil, natural gas, and coal.

Congressman Latham supported a proposed amendment during a House Appropriation Committee mark-up that would have lifted the ban on offshore drilling.

After voting against adjourning for the August congressional recess, Latham joined 136 House Republicans in the darkened chamber to press the Democratic Leadership to hold an up or down vote on the American Energy Act.

Latham has a long history of supporting and defending Iowa’s renewable energy industry. Through strategic production tax credits, research and job training programs, Congressman Latham expects renewable energy to remain an important part of Iowa’s economy into the future.

Renewable Energy

Congressman Latham has consistently supported funding for renewable fuel research programs in the government, including large Department of Energy wind, solar and bio-fuel programs. He has also supported Department of Agriculture renewable energy grant programs that provide grants to small businesses that develop concepts in renewables.

Renewable Energy for America Program – Congressman Latham led an effort on the House Appropriations Committee to fully fund the energy titles authorized in the new Farm Bill. In addition to the raised levels in the Farm Bill, the House Appropriations Committee further increased grant funding to push the level, for FY-09, to its highest ever. This was done because demand for grants had consistently exceeded available funds.

Obtained funding to help with the construction of a **Wind Turbine on the Iowa Lakes Community College campus**. The turbine provides electricity to the campus, and is also used for an educational program in wind energy.

Renewable energy related legislation supported by Congressman Latham:

The Rural Wind Energy Development Act to provide a tax credit for installation of wind energy property – H.R. 1772

A bill to revise AND increase the **Corporate Average Fuel Economy Standards**, and to provide incentives for alternative vehicles – H.R. 2927

Renewable Fuels & Energy Independence Promotion Act – A bill to make permanent the tax credits for bio-diesel used as fuel – H.R. 196

A bill to extend tax credits for electricity produced from renewables – H.R. 197

Renewable Energy Systems & Energy Efficiency Improvements Act – authorized increased funding for the Renewable Energy for America Program, above H.R. 4897 (Congress). Original cosponsor.

Energy & Water Renewable Fuels Funding Initiatives

- Obtained funding over three years for the ‘**Iowa Stored Energy Plant**’. This ‘only one in the nation’ project is an initiative that seeks to store compressed air, generated from wind energy, in an underground aquifer for future use. The project seeks to overcome the shortcoming of wind energy storage.
- Obtained funding for the ‘**Nevada Energy Project**’, which was oriented toward research in the use of biomass resources for an alternative range of chemicals and fuels that are currently made from petroleum.
- Obtained funding over four appropriations cycles for the **Luther College ‘Valders Hall Science Renovation & Modernization** project. The initiative includes a science building renovation using ‘green’ materials for construction, and new, updated laboratory equipment. The project is an example of what can be achieved using energy conservation materials.
- Obtained funding for the **Iowa Central Community College ‘Renewable Fuels Testing Lab**’ project. The initiative involves a lab that will do quality fuel testing for all types of motor fuels and bio-fuels, including bio-diesel, ethanol and petro-based gas and oil. This is a quality control lab that will interact with producers.

Tax Issues

Congressman Latham understands Iowan's frustrations with federal income taxes and firmly believes the federal government must simplify the tax code. Over the years, the federal income tax has grown far too complex and open to abuse. The overwhelming majority of Americans want to pay their fair share toward the costs of government. However, this spirit has been undermined by decades of wasteful spending in Washington and a tax code that rewards creative avoidance of taxes.

Tax Legislation Supported by Congressman Latham –

Supported a permanent repeal of the Estate Tax (H.R. 2380- the Death Tax Repeal Permanency Act)

Advocated for major reform of the nation's overly complicated tax code (H.R. 510 - the Tax Code Termination Act) This legislation seeks to eliminate the Internal Revenue Code and requires that Congress replace it with a new simplified federal tax system by the year 2010. H.R. 510 states that the new federal tax system should incorporate the following seven ideals: apply a low rate to all Americans; provide tax relief for working Americans; protect the rights of taxpayers; reduce tax collection abuses; eliminate the bias against savings and investment; promote economic growth and job creation and not penalize marriage or families.

HR 3457, the Free File Enhancement Act

This legislation seeks to require the Secretary of the Treasury to enter into an agreement with the Free File Alliance to provide all individual taxpayers with the ability to electronically prepare and file their Federal income tax returns through the Internal Revenue Service website at no cost to taxpayers.

Tax Award received by Congressman Latham:

Hero of the Taxpayer – Americans for Tax Reform – 2007

Tax Fighter Award – National Tax Limitation Committee for work in the Congress

Wall Street Bailout

Congressman Latham stood with Main Street Iowa with his no votes on two recent measures - H.R. 3997 and H.R. 1424 - both named the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act.

Each measure was based on a plan proposed by the Bush Administration that would give the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury unprecedented access to \$700 billion in American taxpayer funds to purchase troubled assets in an effort to stabilize the nation's credit markets.

On Monday, September 29, 2008, Congressman Latham voted against H.R. 3997, which failed by a vote of 205-228. Then, on Friday, October 3, 2008, Congressman Latham also voted against H.R. 1424, which was ultimately approved in the House by a vote of 263-171. This bill, which was passed earlier in the week by the U.S. Senate, was then signed into law by President Bush on October 3rd.

Latham believes that it is clear that action is needed to protect our economy. However, these bills were not the right actions to take in Latham's judgment. He stood on principle and voted against them.

Congressman Latham has said that it is his hope that the Administration, along with the jurisdictional committees of the House and Senate will work to find solutions based on principles that are more responsible to the taxpayer, and contain more than just cursory oversight over those who will carry out any stabilization program.

One constituent's phone call summed up Latham's frustrations with these bills, the frustrations of Iowans, and the overwhelming majority of people across this country. She said, "The people out here in the heartland see this bill and bailout as a result of Washington talking to Washington – and not talking and listening to the real people beyond the beltway."

Latham believes the bailout measures were poorly written and lacked the appropriate oversight necessary for such an enormous expenditure of taxpayer dollars. Unfortunately, the Bush Administration's desire to rush the bill through congress, mixed with partisan bickering, distorted what should have been a thoughtful and orderly legislative process.

Consequently, alternative proposals were not allowed consideration, debate, or a vote by Congress.

The \$700 billion price tag was chosen without any proper justification. When asked about why the figure of \$700 billion was chosen, a spokesperson for the Treasury Department responded in a news article last week that the Department came up with it because those in charge wanted "a really large number". Latham feels strongly that any proposal that costs upwards of \$2,000 for very man, woman and child in the United States, deserves a much stronger justification and explanation.

When he voted against the first proposal, Congressman Latham did so with the hope that Congress would craft a more acceptable bill. His hopes were dashed after the U.S. Senate not only embraced the same bill the House had earlier rejected, but made the bill more expensive by adding provisions unrelated to the credit crisis.

Prior to the vote on the Senate-revised measure, Latham, along with some other members, proposed an alternative plan that would have protected the taxpayer and limited spending until it was proven that the Bush Administration's plan was actually working, and that Wall Street was not simply taking advantage of government largesse. He felt, strongly, that a \$700 billion expenditure, one our government can hardly afford, deserved more deliberation and the inclusion of alternative ideas.

Our nation's economic health is critically important, so congress has a responsibility to craft legislation of great economic consequence with great care. That was not accomplished in this situation; as such, Tom believes that Congress will have to revisit this new law when it reconvenes following the November elections and in the Congress in January of 2009.