

2012

ANNUAL REPORT TO NORTHERN MICHIGAN

**U.S. REPRESENTATIVE DAN BENISHEK M.D.
MICHIGAN'S FIRST CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
JANUARY 15, 2013**

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Dear Michigander:

As a new year dawns and a new Congress is sworn in, the challenges facing our nation remain the same—an economy that is not growing fast enough, too many people out of work, and a federal government that has grown so big we can no longer afford it. For over ten generations, the promise of the American Dream has made our country like no other, but today many fear that promise is in doubt.

Like many in Northern Michigan, my family didn't have much when I was growing up, but I worked hard, saved money, and was able to become a doctor and raise my family in Upper Michigan. My goal since coming to Congress has been to ensure that our children and grandchildren will have the same shot at the American Dream that I did growing up. That's why I've been focused on supporting policies that will improve the economy and create jobs in our region.

“My main focus has been and will remain to support policies that will create jobs and allow our children and grandchildren to continue living and working in Northern Michigan.”

As your voice in Congress, I have never pretended to know all the answers to our nation's problems. What I have done during my first term in Congress is to read, line by line, each piece of legislation that has come across my desk and to vote in a way that I believe reflects the values and interests of Northern Michigan's citizens. I have also worked to ensure my office is as helpful as possible to the constituents of Michigan's First District and advocated for the issues that are important to the people of our region.

There is no doubt that many critical decisions for our nation lie ahead, but the power of our people's union is greater than all the challenges America faces. I believe if we remain true to the principles that have always made this country great—liberty, limited government, and a free economy—we can renew the promise of the American Dream for generations to come.

Please know that I am honored to continue serving as your representative in Congress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dan Benishek". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Dan Benishek M. D.
Member of Congress
Michigan's First District

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ABOUT DR. DAN BENISHEK

Dan Benishek's story is like that of many people from Northern Michigan. Dan was born in Iron River, Michigan. His family didn't have much when he was growing up, and his father was killed in a mining accident when he was only 5 years old. After his father's death, Dan's mother, with the help of family, raised Dan and his brother, Tim.

As a boy, Dan worked in his grandmother's business—the Iron River Hotel. Dan made beds, hauled beer, and cleaned the spittoons. His grandmother paid him \$10 a week for his efforts, but he had to save it for the future.

After Dan graduated from West Iron High School in 1970, he went on to earn a B.S. in biology from the University of Michigan in 1974. Dan graduated from Wayne State Medical School in 1978 and completed a Family Practice internship in Flint at St Joseph's Hospital. He has served as a general surgeon in Michigan's Upper Peninsula in a private practice since 1983. He has worked part-time at the Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center in Iron Mountain for the past twenty years.



Dan worked as a general surgeon in Iron Mountain for nearly 30 years and raised his family in Iron Mountain. Along the way, it never occurred to him to get into politics, let alone run for Congress. But, like many people in Northern Michigan, Dan just got tired of seeing career politicians in Washington waste taxpayer dollars our nation doesn't have on bills they didn't even read.

Since coming to Congress, Dan has been fighting every day to create jobs in Northern Michigan, improve services to our veterans, and renew the promise of the American Dream for our children, grandchildren and future generations.

Dan is an avid hunter and fisherman and a proud member of the NRA and the GOA. Dan and his wife Judy live near Crystal Falls, Michigan. They have five children and three grandchildren. Prior to being sworn into Congress on January 5, 2011, Dr. Benishek had never sought nor held any previous public office.

2012: A YEAR IN PICTURES



Dr. Dan Benishek speaks with Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-VA) at the 2012 March For Life on the National Mall on January 23, 2012.



Dr. Dan Benishek attends arguments at the U.S. Supreme Court regarding the constitutionality of the new health care law on March 28, 2012.



Dr. Dan Benishek helps 3rd grade students in Iron River plant a tree on May 2, 2012.



Dr. Dan Benishek is briefed by local emergency workers during the Duck Lake Fire in Luce County on May 26, 2012.



Dr. Dan Benishek meets with Joshua Ische, a West Point Military Academy nominee, on April 4, 2012.



Dr. Dan Benishek meets with girls from the Elk Rapids 4H Club on June 18, 2012.



Dr. Dan Benishek attends a joint memorial ceremony on the East Front of the U.S. Capitol to remember the 9-11 terror attacks on September 11, 2012.



Dr. Dan Benishek and his wife Judy in Iron Mountain, on Election Day, November 6, 2012.



Dr. Dan Benishek, joined by his son Mick Grunlund and nephew Trent Benishek, is sworn into his second term by House Speaker John Boehner on January 3, 2013.

I. SPONSORED LEGISLATION

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H.R. 2209: “Pre-decisional Forestry Review Process”

To replace the current Forest Service administrative appeals process with a pre-decisional administrative review process modeled after the successful approach used in the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003, and for other purposes.

BACKGROUND:

According to the American Forest & Paper Association, timber and paper products represent a \$1 billion dollar industry in the State of Michigan. Dr. Dan Benishek introduced H.R. 2209 on July 16, 2011, in response to learning from businesses and industry specialists that responsible timber harvesting of federal forests have been slowed by bureaucratic barriers and long delays.

KEY FACTS:

- Lawsuits and red tape from outside groups have delayed and prevented responsible timber harvests on federal forest land.
- In response, Dr. Benishek introduced simple, common sense legislation with the hope of streamlining the process and creating jobs.
- Federal law mandates that the United States Forest Service (USFS) undertake an extensive study and release a long term plan for timber sales. These studies are time consuming, expensive and require a public comment period from citizens.
- Many groups who oppose any timber sales have refused to participate in the public comment period and then sued the USFS after the study with the hope of delaying or preventing timber sales. These lawsuits have successfully slowed the timber sale process across the country.
- Dr. Benishek’s legislation requires all public comments and concerns be raised before a timber sale is planned. It requires all stakeholders to “put their cards on the table” to allow the USFS to make a fair and responsible decision.

STATUS:

UPDATE: H.R. 2209 has become law. The legislation was wrapped into PL 112-74, the “Consolidated Appropriations Act” on December 23, 2011, as Section 428. It was signed into law by President Obama. The Obama Administration issued the new regulations for forestry in April 2012.

H.R. 2834: “Recreational Fishing and Hunting Heritage Opportunities Act”

To recognize the heritage of recreational fishing, hunting, and shooting on Federal public lands and ensure continued opportunities for these activities.

BACKGROUND:

Threats to traditional activities such as hunting, fishing and shooting are growing: Animal rights and environmental activists continue to press for hunting, fishing and shooting closures on public lands. Courts are requiring federal agencies to treat hunting, fishing and shooting as “new” activities which cannot be authorized (and continued) until numerous lengthy and costly environmental reviews and land plans are completed.

KEY FACTS:

- This bill will block these threats by directing federal agencies to exercise their land management discretion to facilitate sportsmen activities, subject to other applicable law.
- Hunting, fishing and shooting will be considered authorized and approved – lands and waters are open until closed.
- This bill does not affect areas under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service or national monuments.
- Existing authority to restrict or close lands and waters to fishing, hunting and shooting will remain in effect, but the agencies must demonstrate that such restrictions are necessary and supported by evidence.

STATUS:

UPDATE: This bill was wrapped into H.R. 4089, the Sportsman’s Heritage Act of 2012, which passed the House on April 14, 2012. Additionally, H.R. 2834 was marked up in Natural Resources Committee on July 19, 2012 and reported favorably out of committee. Ultimately, the US Senate failed to act on the legislation.

H.R. 3216: “VHA Ophthalmologic Service Establishment Act of 2011”

To install a national program director for ophthalmology to act as the principal advisor to the Undersecretary for Health on ophthalmology policies and procedures, and provides national leadership for Veterans’ Health Administration (VHA) ophthalmology initiatives throughout the entire Veterans’ health care system.

BACKGROUND:

The critical eye care needs of veterans are expanding in scope and complexity and the need for eye care services within the VHA has grown significantly in recent years. The demand is fueled by an increase in combat-related eye injuries and an aging veteran population susceptible to age-related onset of eye disease.

KEY FACTS:

- Large numbers of veterans are returning home with battlefield eye injuries or suffering from the visual symptoms associated with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).
- Approximately 60 to 70 percent of severe and moderate TBI cases and 40 percent of mild TBI cases include some form of visual impairment. These veterans will ultimately seek Veterans’ eye care services.
- By 2020, the number of veterans over age 85 is projected to increase by 173 percent. As the veteran population served by the VA ages, the demand for eye care is expected to double.
- Glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, and macular degeneration are complex diseases that are highly prevalent in the aging veteran population.

STATUS:

UPDATE: While no major legislative action was taken on this bill in the House, the mere introduction of this measure by Dr. Benishek urged the Veterans Administration Department to install a program director for ophthalmology in 2012, thereby fulfilling the primary goal of the bill. Rep. Benishek will continue to work with the VA to ensure that the ophthalmologic needs of all Veterans are met—whether through legislative or administrative means.

H.R. 3378: “Naming Munising Post Office For Elizabeth L. Kinnunen”

To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 220 Elm Avenue in Munising, Michigan, as the "Elizabeth L. Kinnunen Post Office Building"

BACKGROUND:

An immigrant from Finland, the former Elizabeth L. Paasto married Oscar Kinnunen. Together, the couple operated a boarding house in Marquette, Michigan. They also raised eleven children together. Her husband died in 1952.

Mrs. Kinnunen had the unfortunate distinction of being a double gold star mother: her son Biso was killed in action during the Battle of the Bulge in World War II, while her son Raymond was killed during the Korean War. Another son, Reino, served in West Germany during the Korean War.

KEY FACTS:

- This bill honors an upstanding citizen of Northern Michigan who gave of herself and her children to her country asking little in return—an example of the many virtuous citizens from Northern Michigan.
- This bill enjoys the support of the City of Munising, Alger County, and the American Legion.
- The legislation has been cosponsored by every member of the Michigan delegation.

STATUS:

UPDATE: H.R. 3378 was passed by the House of Representatives on December 21, 2012 by voice vote and will be sent to the U.S. Senate. The legislation was originally referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform and received 14 cosponsors, the entire Michigan delegation.

H.R. 3411: “Modifying a land grant issue at the Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society”

To modify a land grant patent issued by the Secretary of the Interior to the Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society in Chippewa County, MI. The bill corrects an error in the patent issue to reflect a 2002 development plan to improve the facility and raises awareness for those who sacrificed while bravely navigating the Great Lakes.

BACKGROUND:

Early in 2011, residents of Chippewa County contacted Dr. Benishek concerned about a bureaucratic road block that prevented the Great Lake Shipwreck Society from making improvements and additions to their facility. Only an act of Congress is able to correct an error in the land patent enacted in 1992. Dr. Benishek introduced H.R. 3411 in response to these concerns.

KEY FACTS:

- The history of Lake Superior—the largest lake in the world—is rich in maritime tradition. From Native Americans, to the earliest fur traders, to the large ore carriers that dominate the waters today, Lake Superior has always been a vital resource for trade and recreation in Northern Michigan.
- Dr. Benishek’s H.R. 3411 represents a simple, common sense legislation that modifies a patent issued by the U.S. Department of Interior in 1998 to reflect a 2002 development plan to improve the facility.
- By improving the museum’s facilities, the legislation works to continue honoring the important maritime tradition of Lake Superior shipping.

STATUS:

UPDATE: This bill has become law. An identical version of this bill, S. 404, passed in the US Senate by unanimous consent. Once it passed in the Senate, Dr. Benishek worked with House leadership to fast track the bill. The bill passed on a motion to suspend the rules and was agreed to 380-0 on June 20, 2012. President Obama signed the bill into law on June 27, 2012.

H.R. 3861: "To name the Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center driveway in honor of James Priestap"

To name the front circle drive on the north side of the Oscar G. Johnson Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility in Iron Mountain, Michigan, as the "Sergeant First Class James D. Priestap Drive"

BACKGROUND:

This legislation would name the driveway at the Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center in honor of Sgt. James Priestap of Dickinson County. While bravely serving his nation in Iraq, Sgt. Priestap was killed in action on Thanksgiving Day, November 23, 2006. Sgt. Priestap worked as police officer at the Iron Mountain VA Medical Center, where Dr. Benishek worked as a doctor.

KEY FACTS:

- James Priestap was born in Royal Oak in 1967.
- Sgt. Priestap graduated from North Dickinson High School in 1985. From there he attended Ferris State University and Northern Michigan University before joining the U.S. Navy as a rescue swimmer.
- Sgt. Priestap's awards and decorations include: the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart Medal, the Navy, Marine and Army Achievement Medals, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Medal, the Iraqi Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terror Expeditionary Medal, the Global War on Terror Service Medal and the Combat Action Badge.

STATUS:

As of December 31, 2012, H.R. 3861 has been referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. This bill has been cosponsored by every member of the Michigan delegation. This measure also has the support of all congressionally chartered Veteran Service Organizations in the State of Michigan. Dr. Benishek has also written to the VA Secretary requesting that this action be taken administratively.

H.R. 6114: “Surplus Property for Veterans Act”

To amend title 40, United States Code, to grant veterans access to Federal excess and surplus property.

BACKGROUND:

This bill, authored by Dr. Benishek, would amend federal law to allow the transfer of federal surplus property to a Veteran Service Organization (VSO) whose membership comprises substantially veterans and whose representatives are recognized by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA).

KEY FACTS:

- In December 2010, President Obama signed the “Formerly Owned Resources for Veterans to Express Thanks for Service Act of 2010.” This legislation established eligibility for certain VSOs to receive surplus property under the auspices of the Federal Surplus Property Program. This includes property abandoned by the federal government, for example unused military vehicles that VSOs could use for veterans’ parades.
- The United States General Services Administration issued interim guidelines for use by state agencies for surplus property for determining eligibility of veteran's organizations. Those guidelines provided that eligible VSOs must acquire surplus personal property for the purposes of education or public health.
- This requirement greatly limits a VSO’s ability to obtain federal surplus property because most VSOs are not set up to administer a health or educational program.
- Dr. Benishek’s bill would remove this restriction and amend current law to make eligible for federal surplus property an organization whose membership substantially comprises veterans and representatives that are recognized by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

STATUS:

As of December 31, 2012, H.R. 6114 has been referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

H.R. 6297: “Reducing Barriers to Veterans’ Benefits Act”

To establish a presumption of service-connected disability for combat veterans and veterans whose military duties exposed them to high levels of noise and subsequently suffer from tinnitus and/or hearing loss.

BACKGROUND:

Currently, 567,749 VA disability claims are backlogged. Together, hearing loss and tinnitus represent nearly twenty percent of all disability claims in the system. This bill authored by Dr. Benishek will help ease the overall backlog by allowing the VA to more quickly process hearing loss and tinnitus claims, which will free up needed resources to develop the more complicated claims.

KEY FACTS:

- Many veterans exposed to acoustic trauma during their service now suffer from hearing loss and/or tinnitus. Too often, they are unable to prove that their hearing problems began in or were caused by military service because of inadequate in-service testing procedures, lax examination practices, or poor recordkeeping.
- The total number of veterans who experience noise-induced tinnitus and/or hearing loss as a result of military service is substantial.
- Tinnitus is the number one service-connected disability for veterans from all periods of service accounting for almost 841,000 individuals.
- Since 1999, the number of veterans receiving service-connected disability for tinnitus has increased by an average rate of 17 percent each year.
- 702,000 veterans suffer hearing loss, making this the second leading disability in the claims system.

STATUS:

As of December 31, 2012, H.R. 6297 was referred to the House Committees on Veterans’ Affairs and Armed Services. Dr. Benishek will reintroduce this legislation during the 113th Congress.

II. COSPONSORED LEGISLATION

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REDUCING FEDERAL SPENDING

H.R. 735: Government Neutrality in Contracting Act

Sponsor: Rep Sullivan, John [R-OK-1] (introduced 2/16/2011) **Cosponsors:** 180
Committees: House Oversight and Government Reform
Latest Major Action: 2/18/2011 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Technology, Information Policy, Intergovernmental Relations and Procurement Reform.

H.R. 1167: Welfare Reform Act of 2011

Sponsor: Rep Jordan, Jim [R-OH-4] (introduced 3/17/2011) **Cosponsors:** 75
Committees: House Ways and Means; House Budget; House Rules; House Agriculture; House Energy and Commerce
Latest Major Action: 3/29/2011 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Nutrition and Horticulture.

H.R. 1182: GSE Bailout Elimination and Taxpayer Protection Act

Sponsor: Rep Hensarling, Jeb [R-TX-5] (introduced 3/17/2011) **Cosponsors:** 80
Committees: House Financial Services
Latest Major Action: 4/4/2011 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Capital Markets and Government Sponsored Enterprises.

H.R. 2179: To amend title 49, United States Code, to direct the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security (Transportation Security Administration) to transfer unclaimed money recovered at airport security checkpoints to United Service Organizations

Sponsor: Rep Miller, Jeff [R-FL-1] (introduced 6/14/2011) **Cosponsors:** 39
Committees: House Homeland Security
Latest Major Action: 5/8/2012 Placed on the Union Calendar, Calendar No. 328.

H.R. 3634: Federal Prison Industries Competition in Contracting Act of 2011

Sponsor: Rep Huizenga, Bill [R-MI-2] (introduced 12/12/2011)

Cosponsors: 33

Committees: House Judiciary

Latest Major Action: 1/6/2012 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security.

H.R. 3778: Budget Before Borrowing Act of 2012

Sponsor: Rep Lamborn, Doug [R-CO-5] (introduced 1/18/2012)

Cosponsors: 18

Committees: House Rules; House Budget

Latest Major Action: 1/18/2012 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the Committee on Rules, and in addition to the Committee on the Budget, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

H.R. 3883: Budget or Bust Act

Sponsor: Rep Broun, Paul C. [R-GA-10] (introduced 2/2/2012)

Cosponsors: 11

Committees: House Budget; House Administration; House Oversight and Government Reform; House Rules

Latest Major Action: 2/2/2012 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the Committee on the Budget, and in addition to the Committees on House Administration, Oversight and Government Reform, and Rules, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

H.R. 4256: Pool Safety and Accessibility for Everyone (Pool SAFE) Act

Sponsor: Rep Mulvaney, Mick [R-SC-5] (introduced 3/26/2012)

Cosponsors: 79

Committees: House Judiciary

Latest Major Action: 4/9/2012 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on the Constitution.

H.R. 6016: Government Employee Accountability Act

Sponsor: Rep Kelly, Mike [R-PA-3] (introduced 6/21/2012)

Cosponsors: 13

Committees: House Oversight and Government Reform

Latest Major Action: 9/21/2012 Placed on the Union Calendar, Calendar No. 497.

H.R. 6213: No More Solyndras Act

Sponsor: Rep Upton, Fred [R-MI-6] (introduced 7/26/2012)

Cosponsors: 21

Committees: House Energy and Commerce; House Science, Space, and Technology; Senate Energy and Natural Resources

Latest Major Action: 9/19/2012 Referred to Senate committee. Status: Received in the Senate and Read twice and referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 6438: Member Pay Reduction and Responsibility Act of 2012

Sponsor: Rep Bass, Charles F. [R-NH-2] (introduced 9/19/2012)

Cosponsors: 35

Committees: House Budget

Latest Major Action: 9/19/2012 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on the Budget.

LIMITING FEDERAL REGULATIONS

H.R. 2295: Workforce Investment Improvement Act of 2011

Sponsor: Rep McKeon, Howard P. "Buck" [R-CA-25] (introduced 6/22/2011) **Cosponsors:** 7

Committees: House Education and the Workforce

Latest Major Action: 9/8/2011 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training.

H.R. 3993: Capital Access for Small Businesses and Jobs Act

Sponsor: Rep King, Peter T. [R-NY-3] (introduced 2/9/2012) **Cosponsors:** 44

Committees: House Financial Services

Latest Major Action: 2/23/2012 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit.

H.R. 4237: EASY Savings Act of 2012

Sponsor: Rep Fleischmann, Charles J. "Chuck" [R-TN-3] (introduced 3/21/2012) **Cosponsors:** 10

Committees: House Oversight and Government Reform

Latest Major Action: 3/21/2012 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

H.R. 4402: National Strategic and Critical Minerals Production Act of 2012

Sponsor: Rep Amodei, Mark E. [R-NV-2] (introduced 4/19/2012) **Cosponsors:** 27

Committees: House Natural Resources; House Judiciary; Senate Energy and Natural Resources

Latest Major Action: 7/16/2012 Referred to Senate committee. Status: Received in the Senate and Read twice and referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 5873: Forest Products Fairness Act of 2012

Sponsor: Rep Thompson, Glenn [R-PA-5] (introduced 5/31/2012) **Cosponsors:** 49

Committees: House Agriculture

Latest Major Action: 6/27/2012 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Conservation, Energy, and Forestry.

VETERANS

H.R. 2148: Disabled Veterans Commissary and Exchange Store Benefits Act

Sponsor: Rep Burton, Dan [R-IN-5] (introduced 6/13/2011)

Cosponsors: 6

Committees: House Armed Services

Latest Major Action: 6/24/2011 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Military Personnel.

H.R. 3687: To amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for coverage under the beneficiary travel program of the Department of Veterans Affairs of certain disabled veterans for travel for certain special disabilities rehabilitation, and for other purposes

Sponsor: Rep Michaud, Michael H. [D-ME-2] (introduced 12/15/2011)

Cosponsors: 17

Committees: House Veterans' Affairs

Latest Major Action: 12/23/2011 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Health.

H.R. 3767: To grant the Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the First Special Service Force, in recognition of its superior service during World War II

Sponsor: Rep Miller, Jeff [R-FL-1] (introduced 12/23/2011)

Cosponsors: 102

Committees: House Financial Services; House Administration

Latest Major Action: 1/12/2012 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Domestic Monetary Policy and Technology.

H.R. 3895: Protect VA Healthcare Act of 2012

Sponsor: Rep Miller, Jeff [R-FL-1] (introduced 2/3/2012)

Cosponsors: 43

Committees: House Budget

Latest Major Action: 2/3/2012 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on the Budget.

H.R. 4114: Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2012

Sponsor: Rep Runyan, Jon [R-NJ-3] (introduced 2/29/2012)

Cosponsors: 13

Committees: House Veterans' Affairs; Senate Veterans' Affairs

Latest Major Action: 11/27/2012 Became Public Law No: 112-198.

H.R. 4127: To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to exempt certain requests by physicians for consultations by radiation oncologists from the limitation on certain physician referrals under Medicare

Sponsor: Rep Heck, Joseph J. [R-NV-3] (introduced 3/1/2012) **Cosponsors:** 8
Committees: House Energy and Commerce; House Ways and Means
Latest Major Action: 3/5/2012 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Health.

H.R. 4142: American Heroes COLA Act

Sponsor: Rep Runyan, Jon [R-NJ-3] (introduced 3/5/2012) **Cosponsors:** 6
Committees: House Veterans' Affairs
Latest Major Action: 4/18/2012 House committee/subcommittee actions. Status: Forwarded by Subcommittee to Full Committee (Amended) by Voice Vote.

H.R. 4155: Veteran Skills to Jobs Act

Sponsor: Rep Denham, Jeff [R-CA-19] (introduced 3/7/2012) **Cosponsors:** 23
Committees: House Oversight and Government Reform
House Reports: 112-585
Latest Major Action: 7/23/2012 Became Public Law No: 112-147.

H.R. 4287: To amend title 38, United States Code, to expand the definition of homeless veteran for purposes of benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs

Sponsor: Rep Hahn, Janice [D-CA-36] (introduced 3/28/2012) **Cosponsors:** 73
Committees: House Veterans' Affairs
Latest Major Action: 3/28/2012 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

H.R. 4327: Tinnitus Research and Treatment Act of 2012

Sponsor: Rep Michaud, Michael H. [D-ME-2] (introduced 3/29/2012) **Cosponsors:** 9
Committees: House Veterans' Affairs
Latest Major Action: 4/10/2012 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Health.

H.R. 5881: Access to Veterans Benefits Improvement Act

Sponsor: Rep Runyan, Jon [R-NJ-3] (introduced 5/31/2012)

Cosponsors: 2

Committees: House Veterans' Affairs

Latest Major Action: 6/27/2012 House committee/subcommittee actions. Status: Forwarded by Subcommittee to Full Committee (Amended) by Voice Vote.

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

H.R. 750: Defending America's Affordable Energy and Jobs Act

Sponsor: Rep Walberg, Tim [R-MI-7] (introduced 2/16/2011)

Cosponsors: 104

Committees: House Energy and Commerce

Latest Major Action: 2/28/2011 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Energy and Power.

H.R. 1756: National Oilheat Research Alliance Reauthorization Act of 2011

Sponsor: Rep Bass, Charles F. [R-NH-2] (introduced 5/5/2011)

Cosponsors: 71

Committees: House Energy and Commerce

Latest Major Action: 5/6/2011 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Energy and Power.

H.R. 1960: North American Wetlands Conservation Extension Act of 2011

Sponsor: Rep Wittman, Robert J. [R-VA-1] (introduced 5/24/2011)

Cosponsors: 27

Committees: House Natural Resources

Latest Major Action: 3/29/2012 House committee/subcommittee actions. Status: Subcommittee Hearings Held.

H.R. 4406: Stop Invasive Species Act

Sponsor: Rep Camp, Dave [R-MI-4] (introduced 4/19/2012)

Cosponsors: 21

Committees: House Transportation and Infrastructure

Latest Major Action: 4/20/2012 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment.

H.R.6348: Asian Carp Prevention Act of 2012

Sponsor: Rep Rogers, Mike J. [R-MI-8] (introduced 8/2/2012)

Cosponsors: 7

Committees: House Transportation and Infrastructure

Latest Major Action: 8/2/2012 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

H.R. 6564: EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act of 2012

Sponsor: Rep Hall, Ralph M. [R-TX-4] (introduced 9/28/2012)

Cosponsors: 4

Committees: House Science, Space, and Technology

Latest Major Action: 10/10/2012 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Energy and Environment.

HEALTHCARE

H.R. 1063: Strengthening Medicare And Repaying Taxpayers Act of 2011

Sponsor: Rep Murphy, Tim [R-PA-18] (introduced 3/14/2011) **Cosponsors:** 139
Committees: House Ways and Means; House Energy and Commerce
Latest Major Action: 9/20/2012 House committee/subcommittee actions. Status: Ordered to be Reported (Amended) by Voice Vote.

H.R. 1179: Respect for Rights of Conscience Act of 2011

Sponsor: Rep Fortenberry, Jeff [R-NE-1] (introduced 3/17/2011) **Cosponsors:** 223
Committees: House Energy and Commerce
Latest Major Action: 3/28/2011 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Health.

H.R. 1219: Optometric Equity in Medicaid Act

Sponsor: Rep Hall, Ralph M. [R-TX-4] (introduced 3/29/2011) **Cosponsors:** 106
Committees: House Energy and Commerce
Latest Major Action: 3/29/2011 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce.

H.R. 1409: Quality Health Care Coalition Act of 2011

Sponsor: Rep Conyers, John, Jr. [D-MI-14] (introduced 4/7/2011) **Cosponsors:** 10
Committees: House Judiciary
Latest Major Action: 7/11/2011 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Intellectual Property, Competition and the Internet.

H.R. 1672: Scleroderma Research and Awareness Act of 2011

Sponsor: Rep Capps, Lois [D-CA-23] (introduced 5/2/2011) **Cosponsors:** 83
Committees: House Energy and Commerce
Latest Major Action: 5/5/2011 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Health.

H.R. 2182: Generating Antibiotic Incentives Now Act of 2011

Sponsor: Rep Gingrey, Phil [R-GA-11] (introduced 6/15/2011)

Cosponsors: 46

Committees: House Energy and Commerce

Latest Major Action: 6/16/2011 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Health.

H.R. 2529: Restoring Access to Medication Act

Sponsor: Rep Jenkins, Lynn [R-KS-2] (introduced 7/14/2011)

Cosponsors: 58

Committees: House Ways and Means; House Appropriations

Latest Major Action: 7/20/2011 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Health.

H.R. 2960: National Diabetes Clinical Care Commission Act

Sponsor: Rep Olson, Pete [R-TX-22] (introduced 9/15/2011)

Cosponsors: 29

Committees: House Energy and Commerce

Latest Major Action: 9/20/2011 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Health.

H.R. 3315: Direct M.D. Care Act of 2011

Sponsor: Rep Cassidy, Bill [R-LA-6] (introduced 11/2/2011)

Cosponsors: 9

Committees: House Energy and Commerce; House Ways and Means

Latest Major Action: 11/10/2011 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Health.

H.R. 3364: Equity and Access for Podiatric Physicians Under Medicaid Act

Sponsor: Rep Terry, Lee [R-NE-2] (introduced 11/4/2011)

Cosponsors: 86

Committees: House Energy and Commerce

Latest Major Action: 11/4/2011 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Health.

H.R. 3458: To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure the eligibility of eligible professionals practicing in rural health clinics for electronic health records and quality improvement incentives under Medicare

Sponsor: Rep Schock, Aaron [R-IL-18] (introduced 11/17/2011)

Cosponsors: 25

Committees: House Energy and Commerce; House Ways and Means

Latest Major Action: 11/21/2011 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Health.

H.R. 3737: Unlocking Lifesaving Treatments for Rare-Diseases Act

Sponsor: Rep Stearns, Cliff [R-FL-6] (introduced 12/20/2011)

Cosponsors: 13

Committees: House Energy and Commerce

Latest Major Action: 12/23/2011 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Health.

H.R. 3627: School Access to Emergency Epinephrine Act

Sponsor: Rep Roe, David P. [R-TN-1] (introduced 12/8/2011)

Cosponsors: 91

Committees: House Energy and Commerce

Latest Major Action: 12/9/2011 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Health.

H.R. 3667: Primary Care Workforce Access Improvement Act of 2011

Sponsor: Rep McMorris Rodgers, Cathy [R-WA-5] (introduced 12/14/2011)

Cosponsors: 16

Committees: House Ways and Means; House Energy and Commerce

Latest Major Action: 12/22/2011 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Health.

H.R. 3803: District of Columbia Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act

Sponsor: Rep Franks, Trent [R-AZ-2] (introduced 1/23/2012)

Cosponsors: 222

Committees: House Judiciary; House Oversight and Government Reform

Latest Major Action: 7/31/2012 Failed of passage/not agreed to in House. Status: On motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended Failed by the Yeas and Nays: (2/3 required): 220 - 154, 2 Present (Roll no. 539).

H.R. 3827: To repeal the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research program and comparative effectiveness research funding

Sponsor: Rep Guthrie, Brett [R-KY-2] (introduced 1/25/2012)

Cosponsors: 7

Committees: House Ways and Means; House Appropriations; House Budget; House Energy and Commerce

Latest Major Action: 2/1/2012 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Health.

H.R. 4066: Health Information Technology Reform Act

Sponsor: Rep Price, Tom [R-GA-6] (introduced 2/16/2012)

Cosponsors: 60

Committees: House Energy and Commerce; House Ways and Means

Latest Major Action: 2/24/2012 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Health.

H.R. 4971: Stop Abortion Funding in Multi-state Exchange Plans Act

Sponsor: Rep Akin, W. Todd [R-MO-2] (introduced 4/27/2012)

Cosponsors: 70

Committees: House Energy and Commerce

Latest Major Action: 4/27/2012 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Health.

H.R. 5731: Telemedicine Safety Act

Sponsor: Rep King, Steve [R-IA-5] (introduced 5/10/2012)

Cosponsors: 58

Committees: House Judiciary; House Agriculture; House Energy and Commerce; House Natural Resources

Latest Major Action: 6/4/2012 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on the Constitution.

H.R. 5842: Restoring Access to Medication Act of 2012

Sponsor: Rep Jenkins, Lynn [R-KS-2] (introduced 5/18/2012)

Cosponsors: 22

Committees: House Ways and Means

Latest Major Action: 6/5/2012 Placed on the Union Calendar, Calendar No. 364.

H.R. 5969: Ensuring Access to Affordable and Quality Companion Care Act

Sponsor: Rep Walberg, Tim [R-MI-7] (introduced 6/19/2012)

Cosponsors: 28

Committees: House Education and the Workforce

Latest Major Action: 9/26/2012 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Workforce Protections.

H.R. 5970: Protecting In-Home Care from Government Intrusion Act

Sponsor: Rep Walberg, Tim [R-MI-7] (introduced 6/19/2012)

Cosponsors: 29

Committees: House Education and the Workforce

Latest Major Action: 9/26/2012 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Workforce Protections.

H.R. 6079: Repeal of Obamacare Act

Sponsor: Rep Cantor, Eric [R-VA-7] (introduced 7/9/2012)

Cosponsors: 162

Committees: House Energy and Commerce; House Ways and Means; House Education and the Workforce; House Natural Resources; House Judiciary; House Administration; House Rules; House Appropriations; House Budget

Latest Major Action: 7/16/2012 Read the second time. Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 451.

H.R. 6611: Patient Access to Drugs in Shortage Act of 2012

Sponsor: Rep Cassidy, Bill [R-LA-6] (introduced 11/29/2012)

Cosponsors: 4

Committees: House Energy and Commerce; House Ways and Means

Latest Major Action: 11/29/2012 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

TRANSPORTATION

H.R. 1533: Short Sea Shipping Act of 2011

Sponsor: Rep Tiberi, Patrick J. [R-OH-12] (introduced 4/14/2011)

Cosponsors: 46

Committees: House Ways and Means

Latest Major Action: 4/14/2011 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means.

H.R. 3867: Travel Transparency Act

Sponsor: Rep Graves, Tom [R-GA-9] (introduced 2/1/2012)

Cosponsors: 38

Committees: House Transportation and Infrastructure

Latest Major Action: 2/2/2012 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Aviation.

DEFENSE

H.R. 3863: Fair Military Leave Act

Sponsor: Rep Kind, Ron [D-WI-3] (introduced 2/1/2012)

Cosponsors: 13

Committees: House Armed Services

Latest Major Action: 2/23/2012 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Military Personnel.

H. Con. Res. 129: Recognizing 375 years of service of the National Guard and affirming congressional support for a permanent Operational Reserve as a component of the Armed Forces

Sponsor: Rep Miller, Candice S. [R-MI-10] (introduced 6/8/2012)

Cosponsors: 97

Committees: House Armed Services

Latest Major Action: 7/10/2012 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Military Personnel.

H. Con. Res. 110: Expressing the sense of Congress that the President should not interpret or construe the Defense Production Act of 1950 to authorize the President or any Federal department or agency to confiscate personal or private property, to force conscription into the Armed Forces on the American people, to force civilians to engage in labor against their will or without compensation, or to force private businesses to relinquish goods or services without compensation

Sponsor: Rep Adams, Sandy [R-FL-24] (introduced 3/22/2012)

Cosponsors: 46

Committees: House Financial Services

Latest Major Action: 4/26/2012 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Domestic Monetary Policy and Technology.

GUN RIGHTS AND SECOND AMENDMENT

H.R. 3594: Second Amendment Protection Act of 2011

Sponsor: Rep Walsh, Joe [R-IL-8] (introduced 12/7/2011)

Cosponsors: 68

Committees: House Foreign Affairs

Latest Major Action: 12/7/2011 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

H.R. 3814: To prohibit the Department of Justice from tracking and cataloguing the purchases of multiple rifles and shotguns

Sponsor: Rep Amash, Justin [R-MI-3] (introduced 1/24/2012)

Cosponsors: 30

Committees: House Judiciary

Latest Major Action: 2/16/2012 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security.

H.R. 4089: Sportsmen's Heritage Act of 2012

Sponsor: Rep Miller, Jeff [R-FL-1] (introduced 2/27/2012)

Cosponsors: 27

Committees: House Natural Resources; House Agriculture; House Energy and Commerce

Latest Major Action: 4/18/2012 Received in the Senate.

H.R. 5846: Second Amendment Sovereignty Act of 2012

Sponsor: Rep Quayle, Benjamin [R-AZ-3] (introduced 5/18/2012)

Cosponsors: 24

Committees: House Foreign Affairs

Latest Major Action: 5/18/2012 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

JUDICIARY

H.R. 3842: To prohibit Federal funding for lawsuits seeking to invalidate specified State laws that support the enforcement of Federal immigration laws

Sponsor: Rep Black, Diane [R-TN-6] (introduced 1/31/2012)

Cosponsors: 54

Committees: House Judiciary

Latest Major Action: 2/16/2012 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Immigration Policy and Enforcement.

H.R. 3855: Visa Waiver Program Enhanced Security and Reform Act

Sponsor: Rep Quigley, Mike [D-IL-5] (introduced 1/31/2012)

Cosponsors: 42

Committees: House Judiciary

Latest Major Action: 2/16/2012 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Immigration Policy and Enforcement.

H.R. 4232: Restoring Essential Safeguards for a Transparent, Open, and Reliable Executive under FOIA Act

Sponsor: Rep Turner, Michael R. [R-OH-3] (introduced 3/21/2012)

Cosponsors: 20

Committees: House Oversight and Government Reform

Latest Major Action: 3/21/2012 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

H.R. 5817: Eliminate Privacy Notice Confusion Act

Sponsor: Rep Luetkemeyer, Blaine [R-MO-9] (introduced 5/17/2012)

Cosponsors: 43

Committees: House Financial Services

Latest Major Action: 12/3/2012 House floor actions. Status: At the conclusion of debate, the Yeas and Nays were demanded and ordered. Pursuant to the provisions of clause 8, rule XX, the Chair announced that further proceedings on the motion would be postponed.

H.R. 5925: Preserving Freedom from Unwarranted Surveillance Act of 2012

Sponsor: Rep Scott, Austin [R-GA-8] (introduced 6/7/2012)

Cosponsors: 24

Committees: House Judiciary

Latest Major Action: 6/18/2012 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security.

H.R. 5953: Prohibiting Back-door Amnesty Act

Sponsor: Rep Quayle, Benjamin [R-AZ-3] (introduced 6/18/2012)

Cosponsors: 41

Committees: House Judiciary

Latest Major Action: 6/28/2012 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Immigration Policy and Enforcement.

H. J. Res 104: Disapproving a rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to Temporary Non-agricultural Employment of H-2B Aliens in the United States

Sponsor: Rep Alexander, Rodney [R-LA-5] (introduced 2/17/2012)

Cosponsors: 33

Committees: House Judiciary

Latest Major Action: 2/28/2012 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Immigration Policy and Enforcement.

H. J. Res 110: Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relating to parental rights

Sponsor: Rep Franks, Trent [R-AZ-2] (introduced 6/5/2012)

Cosponsors: 85

Committees: House Judiciary

Latest Major Action: 7/18/2012 House committee/subcommittee actions. Status: Subcommittee Hearings Held.

H. Con. Res. 107: Expressing the sense of Congress that the use of offensive military force by a President without prior and clear authorization of an Act of Congress constitutes an impeachable high crime and misdemeanor under Article II, section 4 of the Constitution.

Sponsor: Rep Jones, Walter B., Jr. [R-NC-3] (introduced 3/7/2012)

Cosponsors: 12

Committees: House Judiciary

Latest Major Action: 3/7/2012 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on the Judiciary.

OTHER COSPONSORED LEGISLATION

H.R. 2335: Tribal Labor Sovereignty Act of 2011

Sponsor: Rep Noem, Kristi L. [R-SD] (introduced 6/23/2011)

Cosponsors: 63

Committees: House Education and the Workforce

Latest Major Action: 9/8/2011 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions.

H.R. 3395: Concrete Masonry Products Research, Education, and Promotion Act of 2011

Sponsor: Rep Shimkus, John [R-IL-19] (introduced 11/4/2011)

Cosponsors: 53

Committees: House Energy and Commerce; House Ways and Means

Latest Major Action: 11/10/2011 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Trade.

H.R. 3643: To provide that Members of Congress may not receive pay after October 1 of any fiscal year in which Congress has not approved a concurrent resolution on the budget and passed the regular appropriations bills

Sponsor: Rep Cooper, Jim [D-TN-5] (introduced 12/13/2011)

Cosponsors: 79

Committees: House Administration

Latest Major Action: 12/13/2011 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on House Administration.

H.R. 4040: To provide for the award of a gold medal on behalf of Congress to Jack Nicklaus in recognition of his service to the Nation in promoting excellence and good sportsmanship

Sponsor: Rep Baca, Joe [D-CA-43] (introduced 2/15/2012)

Cosponsors: 341

Committees: House Financial Services; Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

Latest Major Action: 4/17/2012 Referred to Senate committee. Status: Received in the Senate and Read twice and referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

H.R. 4104: Pro Football Hall of Fame Commemorative Coin Act

Sponsor: Rep Renacci, James B. [R-OH-16] (introduced 2/28/2012)

Cosponsors: 294

Committees: House Financial Services

Latest Major Action: 8/2/2012 Received in the Senate.

H.R. 4133: United States-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act of 2012

Sponsor: Rep Cantor, Eric [R-VA-7] (introduced 3/5/2012) **Cosponsors:** 304
Committees: House Foreign Affairs; Senate Foreign Relations
Latest Major Action: 5/10/2012 Referred to Senate committee. Status: Received in the Senate and Read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

H.R. 4158: To confirm full ownership rights for certain United States astronauts to artifacts from the astronauts' space missions

Sponsor: Rep Hall, Ralph M. [R-TX-4] (introduced 3/7/2012) **Cosponsors:** 33
Committees: House Science, Space, and Technology
Latest Major Action: 10/5/2012 Became Public Law No: 112-185.

H.R. 5738: To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 15285 Samohin Drive in Macomb, Michigan, as the "Lance Cpl. Anthony A. DiLisio Clinton-Macomb Carrier Annex"

Sponsor: Rep Miller, Candice S. [R-MI-10] (introduced 5/11/2012) **Cosponsors:** 14
Committees: House Oversight and Government Reform; Senate Homeland Security
Latest Major Action: 12/6/2012 Referred to Senate subcommittee. Status: Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs referred to Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government Information, Federal Services, and International Security.

H. Res 134: Condemning the Government of Iran for its state-sponsored persecution of its Baha'i minority and its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights

Sponsor: Rep Dold, Robert J. [R-IL-10] (introduced 3/1/2011) **Cosponsors:** 146
Committees: House Foreign Affairs
Latest Major Action: 3/8/2011 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Human Rights.

H. Res. 568: Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the importance of preventing the Government of Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability

Sponsor: Rep Ros-Lehtinen, Ileana [R-FL-18] (introduced 3/1/2012) **Cosponsors:** 331
Committees: House Foreign Affairs
Latest Action: 5/17/2012 Motion to reconsider laid on the table Agreed to without objection.

H. Res.716: Expressing support for designation of August 1, 2012, as "National Eagle Scout Day"

Sponsor: Rep Sessions, Pete [R-TX-32] (introduced 6/28/2012)

Cosponsors: 209

Committees: House Oversight and Government Reform

Latest Major Action: 6/28/2012 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

H. Con. Res. 114: Expressing the sense of Congress that the United States should preserve, enhance, and increase access to an open, global Internet

Sponsor: Rep McCaul, Michael T. [R-TX-10] (introduced 3/26/2012)

Cosponsors: 8

Committees: House Foreign Affairs

Latest Major Action: 3/26/2012 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

III. COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

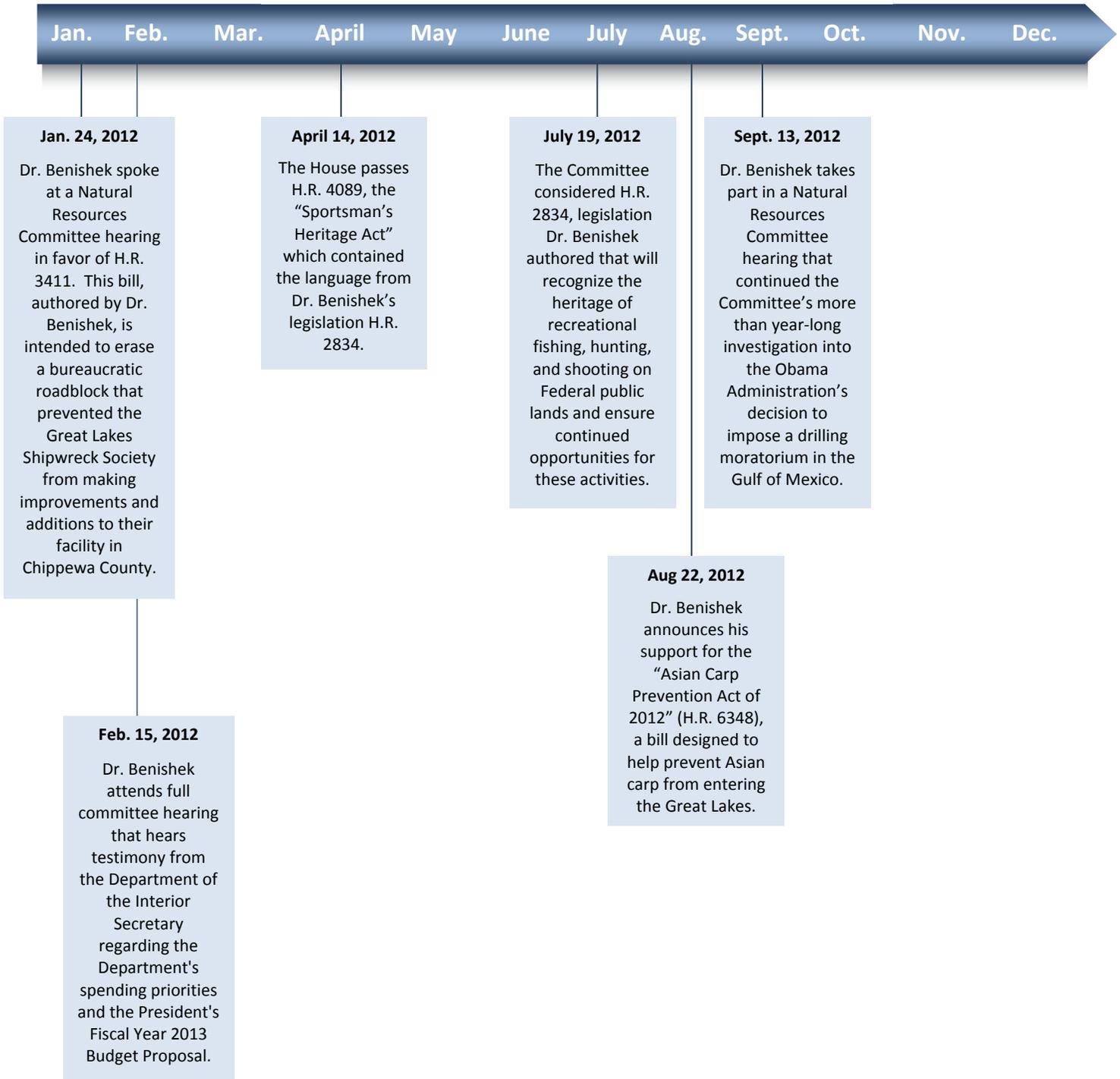
BACKGROUND

The Natural Resources Committee, chaired by Rep. Doc Hastings of Washington, considers legislation about American energy production, mineral lands and mining, fisheries and wildlife, public lands, oceans, Native Americans, irrigation and reclamation. Dr. Benishek was named to the House Committee on Natural Resources on January 5, 2011. Dr. Benishek selected the Natural Resources Committee because he felt it would be an issue area that could benefit Michigan's First Congressional District given our area's vast natural resources. In addition to serving on the full Committee, Dr. Benishek is a member of the Subcommittees on Energy and Mineral Resources and Indian, and Alaskan Native Affairs.

KEY HEARINGS AND ACTIONS TAKEN

- Dr. Benishek took part in a Committee hearing on March 2, 2012, that focused on testimony from economic experts on the impact of gas prices throughout our nation's economy: measures that have led us to become heavily reliant on foreign oil, actions that have led to decreased energy production on federal lands, and the consequences of these actions.
- On July 19, 2012, the Committee held a markup committee hearing on legislation including H.R. 2834, legislation Dr. Benishek authored that will recognize the heritage of recreational fishing, hunting, and shooting on federal public lands and ensure continued opportunities for these activities.
- On July 24, 2012, Dr. Benishek attend a Committee hearing that examined the impact of megafires on communities, endangered species, and their habitats and how environmental litigation has contributed to the deterioration of forest health. Environmental groups use litigation or the threat of litigation as a means to stop forest thinning and timber sales, practices that help reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire. This hearing came only months after a dangerous wildfire burned thousands of acres in Luce County, Michigan.
- On September 13, 2012, Dr. Benishek took part in a Natural Resources Committee hearing that continued the Committee's more than year-long investigation into the Obama Administration's decision to impose a drilling moratorium in the Gulf of Mexico without any scientific analysis that put thousands of people out of work and caused widespread economic harm and decreased American energy production and whether the Obama Administration intentionally misrepresented the views of engineering experts in a Departmental report in order to justify the unilateral moratorium decision.

Timeline of Events 2012 Committee on Natural Resources - 112th Congress



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

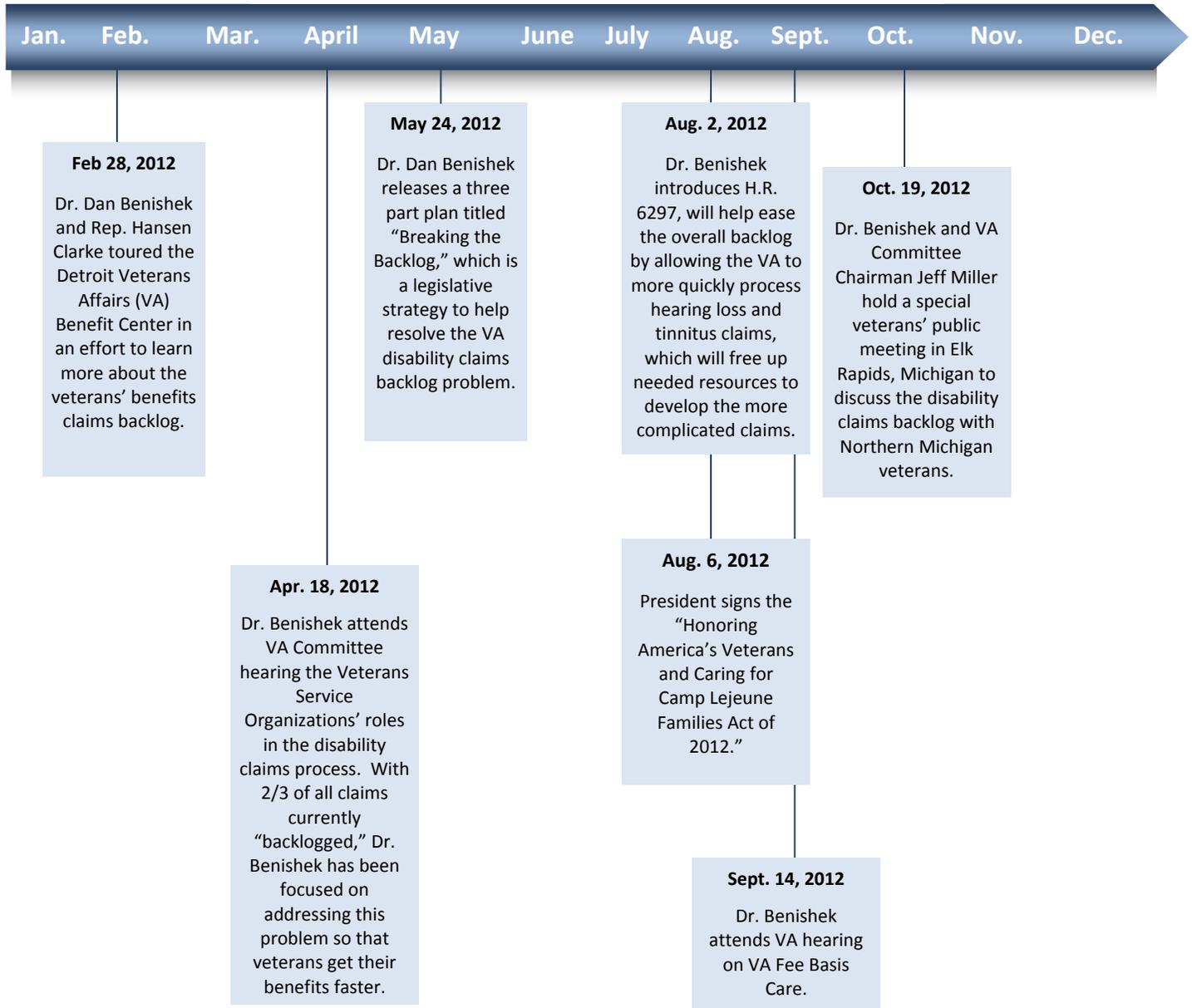
BACKGROUND

The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, chaired by Rep. Jeff Miller of Florida, reviews veterans' programs, examines current laws, and reports bills and amendments to strengthen existing laws concerning veterans, and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). With over 68,000 Veterans in Michigan's First District, and having worked as a VA physician for 25 years, the Veterans Committee was a natural choice for Dr. Benishek. Currently, Dr. Benishek is the only member from the Michigan Delegation on the Veterans' Committee.

KEY HEARINGS AND ACTIONS TAKEN

- On April 18, 2012, the committee reviewed the Veterans Service Organizations' role in the disability claims process. Nearly two-thirds of all disability claims are "backlogged," or have been awaiting a decision for over 125 days. VSOs effectively represent veterans during the claims process, which provides veterans with a better chance of recovering the benefits to which they are entitled.
- The committee evaluated the adequacy of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) mental health staffing at a hearing on May 8, 2012. Witnesses at the hearing concluded that the VA does not have a reliable or accurate method of determining whether they are providing veterans timely access to mental health care services.
- On September 14, 2012, the committee held a hearing titled "VA Fee Basis Care: Examining Solutions to a Flawed System." The VA operates the largest integrated health care delivery system in the country, delivering care to more than 4 million unique veteran patients last year alone. Most of this care is provided by VA directly. However, VA is authorized to send veterans outside of the VA health care system to a non-VA provider to receive needed care and services. The hearing focused on the need to improve the fee program and ways to redesign the system to ensure veterans receive quality, coordinated care in a cost effective manner.
- On August 6, 2012, the President signed into law the "Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012," a bill that was passed out of the Veterans' Affairs Committee. This law is a comprehensive, bipartisan, bicameral legislative package to provide for the needs of veterans, their families, and survivors through improved health care, housing, education, and memorial services. Designed to meet the challenges veterans face today, the legislation also expands the accountability and transparency of the Department of Veterans Affairs, ensuring VA is responsible to those it serves—America's veterans.

Timeline of Events 2012 Committee on Veterans' Affairs - 112th Congress



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

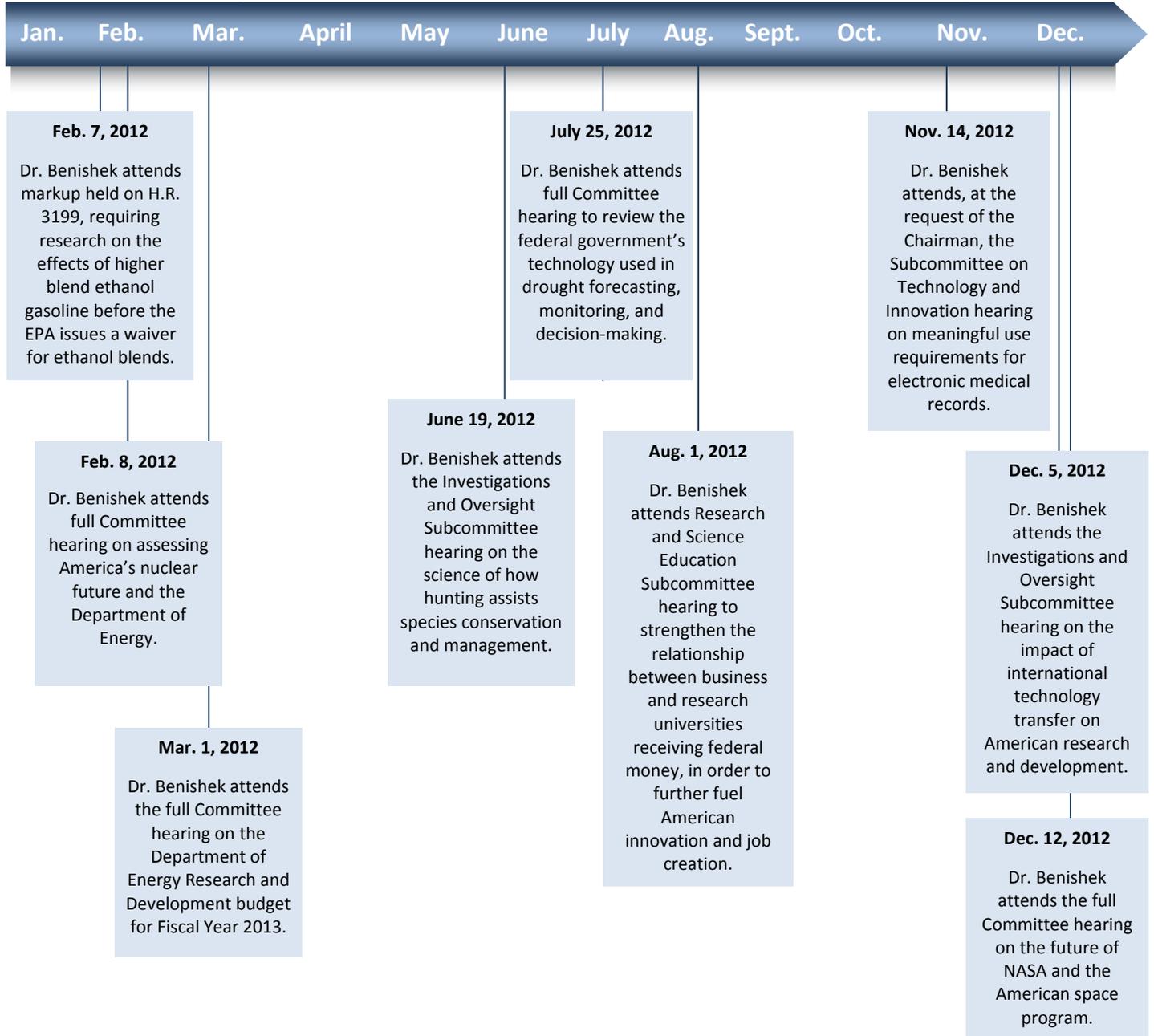
BACKGROUND

Dr. Benishek was named to the Science, Space, and Technology Committee on February 10, 2011. The House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology (SST), chaired by Rep. Ralph Hall of Texas, considers all laws, programs, and government activities relating to nonmilitary research and development, including NASA. As a physician, the Committee frequently relied on Dr. Benishek's scientific and research background. In addition to serving on the full Committee, Dr. Benishek is a member of the Subcommittees on Research and Science Education; and Investigations and Oversight.

KEY HEARINGS AND ACTIONS TAKEN

- On February 7, 2012, the full Committee held a markup hearing on a bill "To Provide a Comprehensive Assessment of the Scientific and Technical Research on the Implications of the Mid-Level Ethanol Blends Act" (H.R. 3199). Dr. Benishek was an original cosponsor of this bill. The purpose of this measure is to require the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to assess the safety, durability, and performance of mid-level ethanol blends (ethanol-gasoline blends containing 15-20 percent ethanol by volume) before allowing higher amounts of ethanol in gasoline. This measure passed the Committee by a vote of 19-7, but was not voted on by the full House.
- In response to the devastating droughts across the country this year, on July 25, the full Committee held a hearing to review the National Integrated Drought Information System – the federal government's scientific system for drought forecasting, monitoring, and decision-making.
- On August 1, 2012, the Subcommittee on Research and Science Education held a hearing on the relationship between business and research universities to investigate how these collaborations can fuel American innovation and job creation.
- As a physician, Dr. Benishek was asked to attend the Subcommittee on Technology and Innovation hearing on electronic medical records and the federal requirement that health care providers reach "meaningful use" of health information technology. Drawing on his experience as a practicing surgeon, Dr. Benishek questioned the witnesses on why the federal government is requiring implementation of electronic medical records without any standards, resulting in multiple systems used by different doctors and a lack of interoperability.

Timeline of Events 2012 Committee on Science, Space, and Technology - 112th Congress



GOP DOCTORS' CAUCUS

BACKGROUND

Since its formation in March 2009, the GOP Doctors Caucus continues to play an effective role in developing patient-centered, patient-driven health care reforms focused on quality, access, affordability, portability, and choice – including protesting the Affordable Care Act (also known as Obamacare) which has risen costs, decreased access, and put Washington in between patients and doctors. Created by Dr. Phil Gingrey M.D. (R-GA) and Dr. Tim Murphy, Ph.D (R-PA), the Caucus is composed of 21 medical providers in Congress. Caucus members meet regularly to utilize their unique experiences and medical expertise to help reform and strengthen the health care system in the United States while representing the views of their communities.

KEY ACTIONS TAKEN

- **Challenging The President's Health Care Law:** The first step to enacting meaningful reform is to repeal Obamacare, a law which ensures the government takeover of our healthcare system. Dr. Benishek, along with other members of the Doctors Caucus, voted in favor of H.R. 6079, the "Repeal of Obamacare Act" on July 11, 2012. The bill was not been acted upon by the Senate before expiring at the end of the 112th Congress.
- **Health IT:** Health information technology has the potential to save more than \$81 billion annually in health care costs and make the health care system work more seamlessly for patients and doctors. While the federal government currently requires the implementation of electronic medical records, the high initial cost that doctors are currently investing may be wasted due to the lack of uniform standards allowing information to be shared and other systemic challenges. Dr. Benishek was invited to attend the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology Subcommittee on Technology and Innovation hearing. Following that hearing, Dr. Benishek met with stakeholders from around the country to develop legislation that would implement uniform standards to make electronic medical records actually work together across practices while protecting patient confidentiality. Dr. Benishek also cosponsored H.R. 4066, the "Health Information Technology Reform Act."
- **Creation of High Risk Pools:** The Affordable Care Act favors the creation of high risk pools – but only temporarily, as these will expire in 2014. Northern Michiganders are disappointed that this law will increase health care spending, increase taxes on small businesses, kill jobs, and may reduce Medicare Advantage coverage for millions of senior citizens. Dr. Benishek favors the creation of high risk pools and is working to amend the Affordable Care Act to encourage this cost reducing measure.
- **Medical Liability Reform:** Dr. Benishek believes we must address the out-of-control medical malpractice litigation, which is costly not only in terms of these direct costs, but also distorts the way doctors practice medicine. An estimated 20-30 percent of health spending is spent

on wasteful or unnecessary care due to inefficient medical malpractice laws. The lengthy litigation process is also not justly compensating patients who have been injured. Dr. Benishek cosponsored H.R. 5, the “Help Efficient, Accessible, Low-cost, Timely Healthcare (HEALTH) Act of 2011.” Although H.R. 5 passed the House, because no action was taken by the Senate, the bill expired at the end of the 112th Congress. Dr. Benishek remains committed to working with the Doctors’ Caucus to develop medical liability reform that will better serve patients and allow doctors to practice responsible, safe, and efficient medicine dictated by what their patients need, not lawsuits.

- **Medicare and Medicaid Reform:** Before the President’s health care law, Medicare and Medicaid had not seen any major reforms since coming into existence in 1965. It takes an act of Congress to make changes to these government-run programs, but the President’s health care law was the wrong act. These programs are fraught with fundamental flaws: hundreds of billions of dollars in waste, limited or no help to prevent illnesses, no funding to manage chronic conditions, and frequent fraud and abuse. Disease management and preventative care programs would be major cost savers as 95 percent of Medicare costs. A blue ribbon panel of experts needs to be established to review Medicare and Medicaid from top to bottom, determine what works and what does not, and make recommendations for reforms. Dr. Benishek has supported these efforts by cosponsoring, along with other members of the Doctors Caucus, H.R. 452, the “Medicare Decisions Accountability Act of 2011.”
- **Purchasing Health Insurance Across State Lines:** Under current law, purchasing health insurance is limited to within a state’s boundaries. Because there are significant cost disparities between states, a family purchasing a health insurance policy in Wisconsin might pay about \$3,087, but the same policy in New Jersey would cost \$10,398. This is an especially large problem in Michigan with only three health insurance providers to choose from. The option to purchase health insurance from other states would give Michiganders access to more competitive prices through greater competition. Dr. Benishek is currently developing legislative options with members of the Doctors Caucus to resolve this issue.
- **SGR/Medicare Physician Payment Fix:** Medicare is the largest health program run by the government, and it is currently in serious trouble. The sustainable growth rate (SGR) is a method that dictates how much the government will compensate physicians for specific services. Over the past decade, physicians who care for Medicare patients have been scheduled to receive less each year under the SGR, but Congress continues to delay the implementation of the SGR. This causes unpredictability and uncertainty for both providers and patients. On January 1, 2013, Dr. Benishek voted to once again delay the SGR cuts which would have resulted in approximately 30% cut to providers. While Dr. Benishek was very disappointed that this was not a permanent fix, the one-year extension ensures providers in Northern Michigan will be able to continue serving their patients. Dr. Benishek continues to work with the Doctors’ Caucus to demand a full and permanent repeal of SGR.

IV. LISTENING TO NORTHERN MICHIGAN

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PUBLIC “MEET AND GREETS”

BACKGROUND

During 2012, Dr. Benishek traveled extensively throughout Michigan’s First Congressional District, visiting all 31 counties. Dr. Benishek hosted a series of public “Meet and Greet” events where constituents had the opportunity to come and share their ideas, concerns, and comments regarding important issues that face Northern Michigan and the United States as a whole. Members of Dr. Benishek’s casework staff were also present at these public meetings to assist any constituents in need of help with federal agencies.

These events were typically held at city halls, community centers, or local restaurants and were free and open to the public. The Congressman typically opened each event with a short presentation on what legislative initiatives were being debated in Congress at the time, such as the federal budget or the economy. Following the opening presentation, constituents would then have the opportunity to ask questions on any subject or issue they wanted.

The following is a listing of some of the public “Meet and Greets” conducted during 2012:

Iron Mountain Public Meet-n-Greet

4/2/2012

Dr. Benishek’s Iron Mountain Office
Iron Mountain, MI

Alpena Public Meet-n-Greet

4/10/2012

NEMROC (Conference Room)
Alpena, MI

L’Anse Public Meet-n-Greet

4/3/2012

Hilltop Restaurant
L’Anse, MI

Gaylord Public Meet-n-Greet

4/11/2012

Gobbler’s Restaurant
Gaylord, MI

Ishpeming Public Meet-n-Greet

4/4/2012

Bucks Restaurant
Ishpeming, MI

Escanaba Public Meet-n-Greet

5/2/2012

Peninsula Bay Inn
Escanaba, MI

Sault Ste Marie Public Meet-n-Greet

4/9/2012

Ramada Plaza
Sault Ste. Marie, MI

Luce County Farmers Meet-n-Greet

8/10/12

Macaulay Ranch
McMillan, MI

Roger City Public Meet-n-Greet

4/10/2012

Roger City Senior Center
Roger City, MI

Cheboygan Public Meet-n-Greet

9/3/2012

Washington Park
Cheboygan, MI

VISTING NORTHERN MICHIGAN FARMS

BACKGROUND

Michigan is home to over 56,000 farms covering 10 million acres of cherries, dry beans, livestock and everything in between. The state's agriculture sector contributes \$71 billion to the economy.

In order to learn more about the issues facing Northern Michigan farmers, Dr. Benishek has continued to visit farms and meet with farmers all across Michigan's First District.

At the close of 2012, it was announced that Dr. Benishek has been named as a member of the House Committee on Agriculture for the 113th Congress.

The listing below includes some of the farms visited by Dr. Benishek during 2012:

2012 FARM VISITS

Visit To Bahrman Farms

4/9/12

Rumely, MI

Visit To Jenkins Potato Farm

8/9/12

Kalkaska, MI

Visit To Kitchen Farms

4/11/12

Elmira, MI

Visit To Elmaple Farms

8/9/12

Kalkaska, MI

Visit To Manistee Farms

8/7/2012

Arcadia, MI

Visit To Lott Seed Farms

8/9/12

Kalkaska, MI

Visit To Pond Hill Farms

8/7/12

Harbor Springs, MI

Visit To Johnson Potato Farm

10/3/12

Sagola, MI

CLASSROOM VISITS IN 2012

BACKGROUND

During his second year in Congress, Dr. Dan Benishek again visited Northern Michigan classrooms to speak with high school and college students about the legislative process and important issues being debated in Congress. During these visits, Dr. Benishek explained to the students a brief overview of how Congress works, why he decided to run for Congress, his experiences in Washington, and the important bills being debated in Congress during his first term. After this introduction, students asked the Congressman questions on the issues important to them in Northern Michigan.

Dr. Benishek's school visits culminated in a week-long Education Tour of the First District in September. The Congressman also hosted two roundtables to bring together stakeholders to discuss matching skills needed in the workforce with education.

The following is a list of school visits Dr. Benishek made during 2012:

Visit To Iron Mountain High School

February 10, 2012
Iron Mountain, MI

Visit To Northern Michigan University

February 13, 2012
Marquette, MI

Visit To Bay Mills Community College

March 9, 2012
Bay Mills, MI

Visit To Grace Baptist College

September 27, 2012
Gaylord, MI

Visit To LaSalle High School

September 27, 2012
St. Ignace, MI

Visit To Escanaba High School

September 28, 2012
Escanaba, MI

Visit To Gladstone High School

September 28, 2012
Gladstone, MI

Visit To West Iron County High School

September 28, 2012
Iron River, MI

Visit To Menominee Catholic Central School

October 3, 2012
Menominee, MI

Visit To Gaylord High School

October 24, 2012
Gaylord, MI

Other Education Events:

Vocational Training Opportunities Roundtable

Northern Michigan University
Marquette, MI

Vocational Training Opportunities Roundtable

Michigan Tech University
Houghton, MI

JOB PROVIDER VISITS

BACKGROUND

During 2012, Dr. Benishek visited over one hundred job providers in Northern Michigan to learn more about their business and about ways that policies from Congress could help improve their industry and allow them to hire more workers.

Below is a listing of some of the job providers that Dr. Benishek visited during 2012:

Traverse City Manufacturing

3/30/2012

Elk Rapids

Moran Iron Works

4/10/2012

Cheboygan

Armor Express

3/30/2012

Central Lake

Nowicki Sausage Plant

4/10/2012

Alpena

Northern Michigan Veneers, Inc.

4/2/2012

Gladstone

Honeywell Plant

4/11/2012

Boyne City

Northern Hardwoods

4/3/2012

South Range

Mitchell Street Graphics

4/11/2012

Petoskey

Horner Sports Flooring

4/3/2012

Dollar Bay

Alcona Tools and Machine

4/23/2012

Harrisville

Superior Extrusion

4/4/2012

Gwinn

Alcona Motors

4/23/2012

Lincoln

American Airlines

4/4/2012

Gwinn

IMECO

5/1/2012

Iron Mountain

Precision Edge

4/9/2012

Sault Ste. Marie

CCI Systems

5/1/2012

Iron Mountain

2012 ANNUAL REPORT TO NORTHERN MICHIGAN

Listening To Northern Michigan

41 Lumber Company

5/1/2012
Iron Mountain

Wickert Floral

5/2/2012
Escanaba

Quality Sew & Vac

5/2/2012
Escanaba

Pioneer TV & Appliance Inc.

5/2/2012
Escanaba

Stone Cup Coffee House & Stones Deli

5/2/2012
Escanaba

Saykllys Candy

5/2/2012
Escanaba

The Stonehouse of Escanaba

5/2/2012
Escanaba

Carnes BP Amoco Services

5/2/2012
Escanaba

Creative Composites

5/2/2012
Delta

UP Builders Association

5/2/2012
Manistique

DCL Inc.

5/3/2012
Charlevoix

Kilwins Chocolate

5/3/2012
Petoskey

Bearcub Outfitter

5/3/2012
Petoskey

Roast and Toast Café

5/3/2012
Petoskey

Petes Pipe & Tobacco

5/3/2012
Petoskey

James A Reid Furniture

5/3/2012
Petoskey

Meyer Ace Hardware

5/3/2012
Petoskey

Edge Water Design Group

5/3/2012
Petoskey

Jose

5/3/2012
Petoskey

Mclean & Eakin

5/3/2012
Petoskey

Bay Harbor

5/4/2012
Bay Harbor

Northern Michigan Hardwood

5/4/2012
Petoskey

2012 ANNUAL REPORT TO NORTHERN MICHIGAN

Listening To Northern Michigan

MDC Contracting

5/4/2012
Charlevoix

NTI

5/4/2012
Charlevoix

WAY Transportation Company

5/4/2012
Charlevoix

St. Mary's Cement

5/4/2012
Charlevoix

Nona Lisa

5/11/2012
Mackinaw City

Dixie Saloon

5/11/2012
Mackinaw City

Daddy Dolls Inc.

5/11/2012
Cheyboygan

Zany Kitchen

5/11/2012
Cheyboygan

Stafonos Restaurant

5/12/2012
Manistee

Daniel D Laskey Company PC

5/12/2012
Manistee

Tondu Power Plant

5/12/2012
Manistee

Fab-Lite Office Furniture Manufacturing

5/12/2012
Manistee

Branch Café

5/19/2012
Oscoda

Klimmek Sales & Service

5/19/2012
Oscoda

East Jordan Iron Works

5/22/2012
East Jordan

Bay Shore Steel Work

5/22/2012
Charlevoix

Indian Country Sports

5/25/2012
Baraga

Getz Department Store

5/25/2012
Marquette

Fox Motors

5/25/2012
Marquette

War Memorial Hospital

5/26/2012
Sault Ste. Marie

2012 ANNUAL REPORT TO NORTHERN MICHIGAN

Listening To Northern Michigan

Freedom Christian International

5/26/2012
Sault Ste. Marie

Sydney's Restaurant

6/3/2012
Munising

Madigan's Ace Hardware

6/3/2012
Munising

Falling Rock Café & BookShop

6/3/2012
Munising

Pictures Rock Boat Cruises

6/4/2012
Munising

Basic Marine

6/12/2012
Escanaba

Painted Lady Café

6/13/2012
Rogers City

Jeans Gifts

6/13/2012
Rogers City

Country Cousins

6/13/2012
Alpena

Scoops

6/13/2012
Alpena

Bliss Painting

6/13/2012
Alpena

Bay Athletic Club

6/13/2012
Alpena

Perch's IGA

6/13/2012
Alpena

Stoney Acre Winery

6/13/2012
Alpena

Cort Yard Ristorante

6/13/2012
Alpena

Cabin Creek Coffee House

6/14/2012
Alpena

JJ's

6/14/2012
Alpena

R&J Automotives

6/14/2012
Atlantic

Thunder Bay Café

6/14/2012
Atlantic

Atlantic Hardware

6/14/2012
Atlantic

Atlantic Auto Repair

6/14/2012
Atlantic

UPS Facility

6/15/2012
Traverse City

Moomers

6/15/2012
Traverse City

Nolan's Tobacco Shop

6/15/2012
Traverse City

The Chocolate Den

6/15/2012
Traverse City

Grand Traverse Pie

6/15/2012
Traverse City

Visit Shelter Family Dairy

6/15/2012
Kalkaska

White Tails

6/15/2012
Kalkaska

Bentleys

6/16/2012
St. Ignace

Wicker and Willow

7/2/2012
Houghton

Framed By Kathy

7/2/2012
Houghton

Swift Hardware

7/2/2012
Houghton

Good Times Music

7/2/2012
Houghton

Suomi

7/2/2012
Houghton

Freeman Firearms

7/2/2012
Hancock

Vollwerth & Baroni Sausage Manufacturing

7/2/2012
Hancock

Gartner's Furniture

7/2/2012
Hancock

Quincy Footwear

7/2/2012
Hancock

Sayen Business Equipment

7/2/2012
Hancock

Kukkakauppa Flower Shop

7/2/2012
Hancock

Kaleva Café

7/2/2012
Hancock

Enstrom Helicopter Corporation

7/3/2012
Menominee

Lidner & Sorenson

7/3/2012
Menominee

2012 ANNUAL REPORT TO NORTHERN MICHIGAN

Listening To Northern Michigan

FibreK

7/3/2012

Menominee

Odgen Club

7/3/2012

Menominee

Global Response

7/6/2012

Iron River

Potlach Lumbermill

7/16/2012

Gwinn

Subway

7/16/2012

Marquette

Besser Company

7/31/2012

Alpena

Dobers Pasties

8/5/2012

Escanaba

Horizon Book Store

8/6/2012

Traverse City

Golden Shoes

8/6/2012

Traverse City

Captains Quarters

8/6/2012

Traverse City

Cherryland Capital

8/6/2012

Traverse City

M-22

8/6/2012

Traverse City

Twisted Olive Café

8/8/2012

Petoskey

TELETOWN HALL MEETINGS

BACKGROUND

Due to the large size and sprawling nature of Michigan's First Congressional District, Dr. Benishek hosted a series of "Teletown Hall" meetings with constituents in Northern Michigan. Teletown Hall meetings are computerized telephone calls that reach thousands of households at once and allow constituents in Northern Michigan to speak live with their elected representative on any issue they are interested in.

The following is a listing of teletown hall meetings conducted during 2012:

- **1st District Teletown Hall Meeting**

March 26, 2012

Call to 20,000 constituents

- **1st District Teletown Hall Meeting**

May 3, 2012

Call to 20,000 constituents

- **1st District Teletown Hall Meeting**

May 7, 2012

Call to 20,000 constituents

- **1st District Teletown Hall Meeting**

May 8, 2012

Call to 20,000 constituents

- **1st District Teletown Hall Meeting**

August 8, 2012

Call to 20,000 constituents

- **1st District Teletown Hall Meeting**

August 8, 2012

Call to 20,000 constituents

V. OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

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February 17, 2012 | Fighting Against An Assault on Religious Liberty

Congress of the United States

Statement of Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01)

“From the 1099 provision, to IPAB, to the hundreds of billions in cuts to Medicare, it is clear that President Obama's healthcare law is bad medicine for America. But the recent ruling by the Department of Health and Human Services is the most egregious example of federal intrusion to date.

Soon after the ruling was announced, I began hearing from citizens across Michigan's First District. Letters and emails came in by the hundreds, with the vast majority in opposition to the Administration's position. It is evident from this correspondence is that many Northern Michiganders are deservedly upset about the Administration's blatant attack on our religious liberty enshrined in the First Amendment.

The opposition to this rule is not about access to contraception, as my friends on the other side of the aisle would like you to believe. Women and men can already access contraception at very low cost. This debate is over the fact that the Administration's new rule strikes at the fundamental beliefs of our democracy.

The concept that the federal government can force people to pay for actions that violate the teachings of their faith goes against two centuries of American religious freedom. This action represents the very government overreach that the framers of our nation fought against, and the reason the Bill of Rights was added to the Constitution.

Mr. Speaker, like most Northern Michigan citizens, I see the right to practice one's religion as a fundamental liberty. I intend to fight this action forever.”

March 22, 2012 | IPAB: "It's a Very Washington Solution, Isn't It?"

Congress of the United States

Statement of Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01)

"...So, two years ago this week, while President Obama was pitching his 2,000 page health care overhaul, I was in Iron Mountain, Michigan treating patients and wondering how this law was going to change the relationship between a physician and his patients.

Now the president's broken promises have shown us. Instead of providing real solutions to strengthen the doctor/patient relationship, address quality of care issues, and improving the way the way we deliver health care to patients...the President gave us IPAB.

IPAB--The Independent Payment Advisory Board—is a 15 member commission of unelected bureaucrats charged with cutting Medicare spending.

It's a very Washington solution, isn't it? Take something as personal as a physician in his office treating a patient and create a panel of Washington bureaucrats between them to dictate care.

As a doctor, I can tell you that when you set up an unelected board, give them unprecedented power and little government oversight, the results will be clear. This will lead to arbitrary cuts to the Medicare program, less access to care, and rationing.

Today, we are voting to stop that from happening. And this vote will have strong bipartisan support.

Mr. Speaker, we have already seen some of my friends on the other side of the aisle appearing on cable news attacking the Majority's budget plan. And we are sure to see some of our colleagues on the floor next week accusing us of pushing Grandma off a cliff.

But instead of scare tactics and hyperbole, I ask members of both parties to support our effort to repeal IPAB....Support this legislation that eliminates what seniors should really be concerned about...a law that has created a group of highly paid unelected bureaucrats making health decisions for them.

Mr. Speaker, as a physician I am proud to support the repeal of this ill-conceived rationing board on behalf of all of my patients and constituents in Northern Michigan.

Thank you. I yield the remainder of my time."

April 17, 2012 | Supporting Sportsman Heritage Act

Congress of the United States

Statement of Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01)

“Madam Speaker,

I come before the House today as a co-sponsor and a strong supporter of the Sportsman Heritage Act. I thank my good friend Chairman Miller for introducing it. I am particularly pleased that Title I of the Bill contains the Recreational Fishing and Hunting Heritage Opportunities Act that I introduced last September.

Madam Speaker, my Northern Michigan district is blessed with abundant natural resources including three federal forests. Like many in the First District, I have enjoyed hunting and fishing since I was a child. These are memories I have cherished for a lifetime and I want to ensure Northern Michigan’s children and grandchildren will be able to enjoy the same.

Today’s bipartisan bill is not some sweeping or radical piece of legislation...it simply confirms that sportsman will be able to access federal land to enjoy fishing, hunting, and recreational shooting. These pursuits are part of the traditions of American public lands use. Regrettably they are threatened by animal rights and environmental groups that seek to end these traditions.

Like many in the House, I believe these traditions are something to be celebrated and protected. Whether it is trout fishing in May, deer hunting in November, or just shooting clays with some friends, every person in this country has a right to these lands.

Mr. Speaker, let us make clear today that hunting, fishing, and recreational shooting on federal lands must be protected. Let us make sure when our grandkids pick up their fishing rod or firearm for the first time and head out into America’s great outdoors; they have the same rights and privileges that we have always known.

I yield the remainder of my time.”

June 7, 2012 | Opposing Medical Device Tax Hikes

Congress of the United States

Statement of Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01)

“Mr. Speaker,

As a doctor who treated patients in Northern Michigan for nearly 30 years, I strongly support the "Protect Medical Innovation Act." This initiative will repeal the President's 29 billion dollar job-killing tax hike on our medical device manufacturers.

There are medical device businesses in my district that employ hundreds of people. These job providers should not be punished to pay for President Obama's health care law. I'm a doctor, not a tax expert, but I know tax hikes on our job providers will hurt Northern Michigan's economy.

To me, it makes no sense to tax medical innovation. If this tax increase is enacted, there is little doubt these costs will be passed down to consumers and increase health care costs.

Mr. Speaker, I've spent my entire career serving my community as a doctor. I want to see real health care solutions that put patients in control of their care, not the federal government. I believe we need to listen to the American people about the need for real health care reform. I recommend we enact free-market reforms like letting people purchase health insurance across state lines, encouraging medical innovations, and allowing patients more flexibility to decide on how their health care dollars are spent.

Thank you.”

June 18, 2012 | Voicing Support for Chippewa County Museum

Congress of the United States

Statement of Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01)

“Mr. Speaker,

This evening the House will take up Senate Bill 404. A bill from my colleague Senator Carl Levin, as you heard I authored a companion bill in the House last November. This bill will end a bureaucratic roadblock that prevented the Great Lake Shipwreck Museum for making improvements to its facilities located in Chippewa County Michigan, along the shore of Lake Superior.

Only an act of Congress is able to correct an error in the land patent that was enacted in 1992. From the bell from the Edmund Fitzgerald to the Coast Guard Whitefish Lighthouse, the Shipwreck Museum tells the story of the brave men and women who have navigated the Great Lakes for hundreds of years. This facility displays important parts of Northern Michigan’s history.

Each year, some 60,000 individuals visit the museum and explore firsthand the rich maritime traditions of Michigan’s First District.

Preserving Michigan maritime history is a resource that both Senator Levin and I agree warrants bi-partnership support for the benefit of future generations. I would like to thank Chairman Hasting to bring the floor today and encourage all my colleagues to support this measure and bring it one step closer to the president’s desk.

Thank you, I yield back the remainder of my time.”

July 11, 2012 | Supporting A Repeal of the President's Health Care Law

Congress of the United States

Statement of Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01)

"Madam Speaker,

In upholding the President's health care law, the Supreme Court identified the law as a \$675 billion tax increase on America's working families and reminds us that we cannot depend on courts to fix the mistakes Congress has made.

I know something about health care.... I've been a doctor for 30 years treating patients in Northern Michigan. I know the President's plan is not solving our health care problems. In fact, it is making them worse.

The law hurts seniors by cutting more than 500 billion from Medicare. The law creates a board of 15 Washington bureaucrats to decide how to reduce Medicare costs. The law contains more than 13,000 pages of new regulations that will suffocate our small businesses.

The President's law never addressed rising health care costs. America has a great health care system, but the problem is it costs too much. I recommend we enact a step-by-step approach that lowers costs through free-market competition and strengthens the doctor-patient relationship.

The American people have been clear—they don't like this terrible law. I urge all members to support the "Repeal of Obamacare Act" so we can scrap this law and work together on real health reforms that actually lower costs and make health care more affordable.

Thank you. I yield back my time."

July 12, 2012 | Support For Responsible Mining in America

Congress of the United States

Statement of Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01)

“Mr. Speaker,

I come to the floor today to express my support for H.R. 4402, the "National Strategic and Critical Minerals Protection Act." This bill will expedite responsible mineral production in the United States by reducing federal red tape and speeding up the federal permitting process to create new mining jobs.

My Northern Michigan district is blessed with abundant mineral resources. From copper mines in Keweenaw and Houghton to iron mines in Marquette and the western parts of the Upper Peninsula, mining has long been the foundation of Northern Michigan's economy. Currently, mining contributes over \$4 billion dollars to Michigan's economy annually and employs over 30,000 people.

Today, new mining operations in Northern Michigan are being explored. These mines have the potential to create thousands of new jobs. In fact, just last week I visited one of these new mine sites and was able to see firsthand the work they are doing to responsibly utilize Michigan's vast copper resources.

Regrettably, the federal government and Washington bureaucrats have been standing in the way of new mines across this country. Due to lawsuits and government inefficiency, the current process of acquiring permits for a new mining project can take more than a decade. That's right, a decade!

With our economy struggling, we cannot afford to wait 10 years while the federal government sits on its hands. We need to encourage the responsible use of our mineral resources to create jobs and keep America competitive with the rest of the world.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all members to support this common sense legislation to speed up this process and create jobs. If we can get the federal government out of the way, I am confident areas like Northern Michigan can flourish once again.”

November 30, 2012 | Support for Reducing Wasteful Spending

Congress of the United States

Statement of Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01)

“Mr. Speaker,

The time has come for Congress to enact comprehensive tax reform and reduce federal spending to create jobs and boost the economy.

Our nation is facing significant challenges...A weak economy, record deficits, a federal government we can't afford. Many Northern Michigan citizens fear for the future of our republic.

The American people deserve solutions to these problems and comprehensive tax reform is a key part of those solutions.

President Obama has made it clear that his preference is to raise taxes on families and businesses. But that plan won't fix our national debt. It won't improve the economy. Instead, Congress should focus on tax reform and real, significant spending reductions.

The American people have chosen divided government. And with that comes a responsibility for us to work together to fix the problems our nation faces.

So, I urge my colleagues and the President to work together to resolve this fiscal crisis and do what's best for the American people.

Thank you.”

December 20, 2012 | Honoring Mrs. Elizabeth Kinnunen of Munising, Michigan

Congress of the United States

Statement of Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01)

"I come to the floor today to urge my colleagues to support my legislation H.R. 3378, a bill to name the post office building in Munising Michigan after the late Mrs. Elizabeth L. Kinnunen.

Mrs. Kinnunen's story is like that of many people from Northern Michigan and all across this great nation. It's the story of an immigrant who came to this country in hopes of a better life...and left America a better place.

Mrs. Kinnunen came to our country from Finland in 1903. She married Oscar Kinnunen in 1909. They had eleven children, and like parents do all across this country, they worked hard all their lives to ensure their children would have a shot at the American Dream.

Mr. and Mrs. Kinnunen operated a boarding house in Marquette, Michigan. They provided warm beds to many timber and mining workers in Marquette County.

Eventually, they moved to Munising, Michigan where Oscar worked for the Munising Paper Company and Elizabeth worked as a local cook. Mrs. Kinnunen was a faithful member of the Messiah Lutheran Church in Munising.

Mrs. Kinnunen's life was marked by tragedy. Two of her sons, Eiso and Raymond, were both killed in war while defending the freedoms we cherish so much. Eiso was killed in action during the Battle of the Bulge in 1945 and Raymond lost his life during the Korean War in 1952.

We will never know the devastating grief their family must have suffered after such an enormous loss. We will also never be able to fathom the somber dignity Mrs. Kinnunen must have felt, in the words of President Lincoln, "to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom."

Mrs. Elizabeth Kinnunen died on April 5, 1974, at the age of 81. She is not famous. Her name does not grace history books. But Mrs. Kinnunen's life—the hard work she did, the family she raised, the terrible sacrifices she endured—is a small, but important part of this long story that we call the United States of America. It is countless lives like hers that has made this country the greatest nation in the world.

Naming this post office in her honor is a thoughtful and lasting way for the community of Munising to celebrate her life and accomplishments."

For Immediate Release:
14 January 2012

Contact:
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Dr. Benishek Supports Bill To Protect Freedom of Religion

—Legislation Will Block New Federal Rule That Infringes On Religious Liberty—

WASHINGTON, DC: In response to a recent regulatory decision by the Obama Administration, Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) endorsed the “Respect for Rights of Conscience Act” (H.R. 1179), a bill designed to protect the rights of individuals to provide, purchase, or enroll in health coverage that is in line with their religion and moral convictions.

“Religious liberty is one of the cornerstones of America’s democracy and any threat to it must be stopped. I support this bill because it will ensure that health care stakeholders retain the right to provide or enroll in health insurance that is consistent with their religious beliefs without the fear of discrimination,” said Benishek.

Benishek signed onto the legislation after the Department Health and Human Services’ recent ruling that would require all employers to provide health plans that provide coverage for contraception, sterilization, and, in some cases, abortion-inducing drugs. The regulation is part of President Obama’s new health care law, the “Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act” (PPACA). This regulation is scheduled to take effect on August 1, 2012, and all employers will have to be in compliance by August 1, 2013.

“While I have long been a vocal critic of President Obama’s plan to ‘reform’ health care, there is nothing I find more objectionable than this attempt to override our religious freedom through regulatory overreach,” observed the Iron Mountain surgeon.

The “Respect for Rights of Conscience Act” is supported by numerous organizations including the American Center for Law and Justice and United States Conference of Catholic Bishop. Recently, more than 400 Catholic leaders wrote to the Administration asking for the rule to be overturned.

“Just as Thomas Jefferson understood ‘that no provision in our Constitution ought to be dearer to man than that which protects the rights of conscience,’ I feel it is imperative that Congress bring this bill to the floor for passage immediately,” added Benishek.

The “Respect for Rights of Conscience Act” (H.R. 1179) was introduced by Rep. Jeff Fortenberry (NE-01) and currently has 137 cosponsors. The bill has been referred to the House Subcommittee on Health.

To read H.R. 1179, [click here](#).

To watch Rep. Benishek’s comments on the House Floor regarding this bill, [click here](#).

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For Immediate Release:
24 January 2012

Contact:
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Dr. Benishek Urges Support For Bill To Improve Maritime Museum —Lawmaker’s Legislation Will Allow Expansion of Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum—

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today spoke at a Natural Resources Committee hearing in favor of H.R. 3411. This bill, authored by Benishek, is intended to erase a bureaucratic roadblock that prevented the Great Lakes Shipwreck Society from making improvements and additions to their facility in Chippewa County.

“My bill is a simple and straight forward technical correction to a land patent granted to the Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society, located in my district. Located in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan along Lake Superior, the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum presents a firsthand look at the history of those who bravely navigated the Great Lakes, attracting roughly 60,000 visitors a year,” said Benishek at the hearing.

Benishek’s legislation will modify a patent issued by the U.S. Department of Interior in 1998 to reflect a 2002 development plan to improve the museum facility. By improving the museum’s facilities, the legislation works to continue honoring the important maritime tradition of Lake Superior shipping.

“My bill ensures that visitors will continue to learn this narrative history by modifying the patent to reflect a 2002 consensus agreement that allows for the development and expansion of new facilities. Senator Levin successfully passed this legislation in the Senate without objection,” added Benishek, who serves on the Committee on Natural Resources.

A similar bill, S. 404, introduced by Senator Carl Levin (D-MI), passed the U.S. Senate on October 18, 2011.

To watch Rep. Benishek’s comments at the hearing, [click here](#).

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For Immediate Release:
24 January 2012

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Dr. Benishek Comments On State of the Union Address

—Statement of Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01)—

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today released the following statement in regard to President Obama’s State of the Union address to Congress:

“I valued hearing President Obama’s proposals for this country tonight. With over 13 million Americans out of work, he was right to focus heavily on this country’s struggling economy. Despite seeing real opportunity to work together, I think we have a fundamental disagreement in approach.

In the past three years, the President has proposed fixing this country’s economy by increasing the size and price tag of the federal government. This approach has not generated real job growth. Unemployment has floated above 8% for 35 consecutive months. His policies have added \$3.7 trillion to the national debt edged America closer to a future of endless ‘Euro-style’ deficits.

Only a week ago, the Administration chose to bury 20,000 good paying jobs by blocking the construction of the Keystone XL Pipeline. Unlike the President’s stimulus plans and proposals for tax hikes, this private sector initiative would actually create private sector jobs and the Administration turned their backs on it.

There is still time to change the course this nation is on. America can emerge from this economic downturn through entrepreneurship and innovation, not more spending and higher deficits. This can be achieved if the House, Senate, and Administration choose cooperation over partisanship and make needed reforms to get this country hiring again.”

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For Immediate Release:
30 January 2012

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Dr. Benishek Supports Including Harbor Funding Fix in Transportation Bill —Congressman Asks Colleagues To Preserve Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund—

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today expressed his support for including the “RAMP Act” (H.R. 104) into the House surface transportation bill in order to protect funding for the dredging and maintenance of harbors.

“The harbors and waterways of the Great Lakes play a critical part in Northern Michigan’s economy. I see the inclusion of this measure into the surface transportation bill as good news for the maintenance of our harbors and the jobs they support,” said Benishek, who is a member of the Great Lakes Task Force.

Benishek stated the “RAMP Act” is designed to mandate all money collected for the federal Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund be used to maintain and dredge harbors and ports. Regrettably, more than \$6 billion has been siphoned away from the fund and not spent on dredging and maintaining waterways.

In an effort to garner more support for this legislation, Benishek authored a letter to other members of the House of Representatives to support this important measure.

“Since the surface transportation bill has been promoted as a ‘jobs bill,’ I can think of no better way of strengthen the bill than by adding language that will grow the shipping industry and create jobs. The ‘RAMP Act’ has been labeled by supporters as a ‘game changer’ for Great Lakes shipping which is facing serve hardships due to the closing of ports and maintenance issues,” stated Benishek in the letter.

Michigan’s First Congressional District has over 1,600 miles of shoreline—the most in the continental United States and is the only District with shoreline on three of the five Great Lakes.¹

The “RAMP Act” currently has 166 cosponsors, including numerous Michigan representatives, such as Rep. Bill Huizenga (MI-02), Rep. Dave Camp (MI-04), Hansen Clarke (MI-13) and Rep. John Dingell (MI-15).

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¹ Harvard Institute of Politics, <http://www.ioportal.org/>

For Immediate Release:
1 February 2012

Contact:
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Legislation Introduced to Memorialize Sgt. James Priestap

—Circle Drive at Oscar G. Johnson Center to Be Named After Foster City Fallen Soldier—

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today authored legislation to name the circle drive at the Oscar G. Johnson Veterans Center in honor of the late Sgt. First Class James Priestap of Foster City.

“Sgt. Priestap gave his life in the effort to protect America’s freedom. His sacrifice and service will never be forgotten in our community. I am profoundly honored to introduce this legislation to memorialize one of Northern Michigan’s true heroes,” said Benishek, a general surgeon who worked at the Oscar G. Johnson Veterans Hospital before coming to Congress.

Born in Royal Oak in 1967, Priestap graduated from North Dickinson High School in 1985. From there he attended Ferris State University and Northern Michigan University before joining the U.S. Navy as a rescue swimmer. Sgt. Priestap also worked as a police deputy in Sarasota, Florida as well as an officer at the Iron Mountain Veteran's Administration Medical Center and the Dickinson County Sheriff's Department.

While bravely serving his nation in Iraq, Sgt. Priestap was killed in action on Thanksgiving Day, November 23, 2006. Sgt. Priestap’s awards and decorations include: the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart Medal, the Navy, Marine and Army Achievement Medals, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Medal, the Iraqi Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terror Expeditionary Medal, the Global War on Terror Service Medal and the Combat Action Badge. “Throughout his career, Sgt. Priestap chose to put his country and community before his own interests. While this is a small gesture of gratitude for Sgt. Priestap’s sacrifice, the naming of this drive will serve as a lasting memorial for his family and all those whose lives he touched,” added Benishek.

The Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center in Iron Mountain serves 15 counties in Michigan and 10 counties in Wisconsin. The facility has the largest geographic service area east of the Mississippi River, servicing some 53,000 military veterans.

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For Immediate Release:
1 February 2012

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Rep. Reid Ribble and Rep. Dan Benishek To Host Marinette Job Fair —Event For Employers and Job Hunters To Be Held On February 24th—

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Reid Ribble (WI-08) and Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today announced they will be hosting a joint employment fair in Marinette, Wisconsin on Friday, February 24, 2012. The job fair will take place at the University of Wisconsin-Marinette from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

“My number one priority is to get Wisconsin working again. This job fair will make the process of finding a job easier by bringing together job seekers and employers who are looking to hire,” said Rep. Ribble.

“With far too many people out of work in Northern Michigan, I see this job fair as an excellent opportunity to connect employers with the many talented job seekers in our area,” said Benishek, a general surgeon from Iron River.

The goal of the job fair is to provide an opportunity for individuals looking for work to meet with potential employers in the Northern Wisconsin and Northern Michigan area. Participation in the job fair is completely free of charge for both employers and those looking to be hired.

Marinette Job Fair details:

Date: February 24, 2012
Location: University of Wisconsin-Marinette
Field House
1125 University Dr.
Marinette, WI 54143
Time: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Both employers and job seekers can register for the jobs fair at Rep. Ribble and Rep. Benishek’s websites, at: www.ribbon.house.gov and www.benishek.house.gov.

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For Immediate Release:
8 February 2012

Contact:
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Dr. Benishek Says “Yes” To Giving The President A Line Item Veto —Bipartisan Bill Grants Executive Branch Power to Reduce Expenses—

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today announced he will support H.R. 3521, the “Expedited Legislative Line-Item Veto and Rescissions Act,” a bill designed to identify and reduce wasteful spending by the federal government.

“This bipartisan bill simply provides the President another tool to target and eliminate ill-advised federal spending. In this time of unprecedented deficits, it is vital that the executive branch has the ability to make better-informed decisions about its national priorities,” said Benishek.

Under this bill, the executive branch will be given the opportunity to reexamine laws within 45 days after enactment for potentially wasteful spending. This bill will require Congress to take an “up or down” vote within five days after the President proposes any changes to a piece of legislation. The measure allows the President to submit rescission proposals, but a new act of Congress, signed by the President, is required before the rescissions can take effect in order to ensure the law complies with the Constitution.

“This collaboration between both parties—and all branches of government—highlights the growing need and the increasing public demand for reforms in federal spending,” added Benishek.

“It’s just common sense to have another line of defense against wasteful spending. I believe the line-item veto will serve as a deterrent to prevent superfluous spending measures from being added to legislation in the first place,” added the surgeon from Iron River.

H.R. 3521 is one of ten scheduled budget reform bills that the House of Representatives will consider early this year. The House previously passed H.R. 3582, the “Pro-Growth Budgeting Act of 2011;” H.R. 3578, the “Baseline Reform Act of 2011” and H.R. 3581, the “Budget Transparency Act.”

The “Expedited Legislative Line-Item Veto and Rescissions Act,” was authored by House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan (WI-01) and House Budget Committee Ranking Member Chris Van Hollen (MD-08) is scheduled for a vote in the House of Representatives on February 8, 2012.

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For Immediate Release:
9 February 2012

Contact:
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Dr. Benishek Supports ‘No Budget, No Pay’ Legislation —Bill To Halt Congressional Paychecks If No Federal Budget Is Passed—

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today cosponsored H.R. 3643, a bill that will prohibit Members of Congress from receiving paychecks in any year that a federal budget is not enacted.

“This bipartisan legislation is a simple measure aimed at getting Washington to work again. Congress has a constitutional responsibility to outline how it will spend precious taxpayer dollars. This is the job the American people elect their representatives to do and if they cannot get the job done they shouldn’t get paid,” said Benishek, a general surgeon from Iron River.

Benishek stated the legislation will prevent any Member of Congress from being paid if both houses of Congress have not approved a budget resolution and all regular appropriations bills before October 1st of the fiscal year. The bill would also prohibit any retroactive pay to Members after the adoption of a budget.

“Regrettably, history has shown both parties in Congress have been bad managers of America’s money. Congress has passed spending bills on time only four times in the last 60 years. The Senate has not even proposed a budget in over 1,000 days. The American people deserve better than this, and I believe this bill would ensure the people’s business gets done,” added Benishek.

The legislation has received bipartisan endorsements and is supported by NoLabels.org, a non-partisan organization that is focused on enacting bipartisan agreements and making Congress function better.

H.R. 3643 was authored in the House by Rep. Cooper (D-TN) and currently has 19 bipartisan cosponsors. A companion bill, S.1981, was introduced by Senator Dean Heller of Nevada and has been referred to the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

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For Immediate Release:
14 February 2012

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Dr. Benishek Says “No” To Spending Cuts To Veterans’ Healthcare —Legislation Would Exempt Veterans From Automatic Spending Reductions—

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today cosponsored the “Protect VA Healthcare Act of 2012” (H.R. 3895), a bill that protect veterans’ healthcare from a possible 2 percent reduction in funding.

“The men and women who have fought valiantly for this country deserve the benefits they have earned. The federal government is certainly in need of serious spending reductions, but I believe this can be done without endangering care for this nation’s veterans,” said Benishek, a general surgeon who worked at a VA medical center before coming to Congress.

Benishek, a member of the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, stated the “Protect VA Healthcare Act of 2012,” would specifically exempt veterans’ health care programs from anticipated spending reductions. These upcoming reductions are a result of the 2011 “Budget Control Act” which required a \$1.2 trillion cut in spending after Congress failed last year to pass a deficit reduction package.

“When the Budget Control act was passed, it was the understanding of the Veterans’ Committee that VA programs would be exempt from the automatic spending cuts, however the law is unclear on this point. I am still confident Congress can avoid these cuts. In the meantime, Chairman Jeff Miller and the Veterans’ Committee will continue to work with House leadership and the Administration to clarify that veterans program are off the table,” added Benishek.

There are more than 68,000 veterans living in Michigan’s First District, which accounts for 13.7 percent of the District’s population.²

The “Protect VA Healthcare Act of 2012” (H.R. 3895) was authored by Rep. Jeff Miller (FL-01), the Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

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² The Almanac of American Politics, Michigan’s First District, <http://www.nationaljournal.com/almanac/area/mi/01>

For Immediate Release:
22 February 2012

Contact:
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Dr. Benishek Now Accepting Summer Internships —Positions Available for Washington and First District Offices—

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today announced that his office is now accepting applications for summer internships in his Washington, DC and First District offices.

“Congressional internships are an excellent opportunity for our young people to learn the inner workings of Congress first hand. We view our interns as an important part of our offices’ goal to provide quality service to the people of Northern Michigan,” said Benishek, a general surgeon from Iron River.

Benishek stated Congressional internship responsibilities will vary, but generally interns will be asked to answer phones, run errands, research legislation for the Member and legislative staff, attend hearings and briefings, and answer constituent letters on various issues before the House. As a result, interns will learn about the legislative process and the many other functions of a congressional office.

“Students will have the chance to learn about the day-to-day activities of Congress in a way that cannot be achieved in the classroom. We are confident we’ll have many outstanding applicants and are looking forward to having new individuals join the team,” added Benishek.

Dr. Benishek’s summer internship program will be filled in a competitive manner. Priority will be given to citizens from Michigan’s First District, but all applicants will be considered.

Applicants will be asked to submit a resume and two letters of recommendation from people who the applicant knows personally, and should attest to applicant’s character, motivation to serve, and integrity.

Interested applicants can apply online by going to www.benishek.house.gov and downloading Congressman Benishek’s internship application packet. Internships are unpaid positions, but interns in the Washington, DC office will be offered a housing stipend. The deadline for applications is Friday, June 8, 2012.

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For Immediate Release:
23 February 2012

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Dr. Benishek Visits Veterans' Claims Center With Concern Over Benefits Backlog —Northern Michigan Lawmaker Joined by Rep. Hansen Clarke On Detroit Tour—

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) and Congressman Hansen Clarke (MI-13) today toured the Detroit Veterans Affairs (VA) Benefit Center in an effort to learn more about the veterans' benefits claims backlog.

"After fighting for our freedoms overseas, Northern Michigan's veterans should not have to fight VA bureaucracy when they return home. It is evident the VA is in need of better IT systems and more efficient processing. The VA serves a constituency that has served America, and they deserve to have the best service possible," said Benishek, who worked at the Iron Mountain VA Medical Center before coming to Congress.

"It is crucial for Members of Congress to work together, in a bipartisan fashion, to help our veterans obtain the services they deserve. Long delays preventing veterans from receiving their benefits are unacceptable, and I look forward to working with Congressman Benishek and the Detroit VA Benefit Center to improve this situation," said Rep. Clarke, who represents Michigan's 13th District in Detroit.

The Department of Veterans Affairs has been facing a benefits claims backlog for many years. After leaving the military, veterans often have to wait more than a year before they begin receiving benefits. According to the VA Department, of the 19,000 veterans' claims pending in the Detroit Benefit Center, 12,700 or 66.2% are more than 125 days overdue.

"I have also introduced legislation with Congressman Benishek to improve veterans' access to their educational benefits and I am working with the Department of Veterans Affairs to promote the National Veteran Small Business Conference and Expo, which will be held in Detroit this June," added Clarke.

"Congressman Clarke and I are from different parties, but we both recognize the important need to provide our veterans with quality and timely service. This bipartisan visit was helpful in learning more about the challenges facing the VA and how their services can be improved," added Benishek, who serves on the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Michigan's First District is home to more than 68,000 veterans, which accounts for 13.7% of the District's population.

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For Immediate Release:
29 February 2012

Contact:
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Dr. Benishek Supports Bill To Ensure A Federal Budget Is Passed

—H.R. 3778 Will Prevent Further Federal Borrowing Until Budget is Adopted—

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today endorsed the “Budget Before Borrowing Act of 2012” (H.R. 3778), a bill that will prohibit any extension of the federal debt limit until both houses of Congress have approved a budget plan.

“Congress should pass a budget to set this country’s spending priorities before adding another penny to the national debt. With the federal government borrowing 40 cents of every dollar it spends, we need to establish a fiscal blueprint to balance the budget,” said Dr. Benishek, a general surgeon from Iron River.

Dr. Benishek stated the “Budget Before Borrowing Act” will stipulate that Congress cannot vote to increase the federal borrowing limit if a federal budget is not enacted in each fiscal year. The requirement can only be waived by a vote of two-thirds of the Members in both Houses.

“This legislation is a straight-forward way of getting Congress to do the people’s business and pass a budget plan. The fact the U.S. Senate has failed to pass a budget in over three years or even propose one this year underscores the need for this type of legislation,” added Dr. Benishek.

Since 2009, the national debt has increased by \$5.8 trillion or nearly 60 percent in just three years, from \$10.6 trillion to \$16.4 trillion. During the same time, Congress has failed to pass a federal budget. On February 3, 2012, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid announced the Senate would not even propose a budget for Fiscal Year 2013.

The “Budget Before Borrowing Act of 2012” was authored by Rep. Doug Lamborn (CO-05), who argues, “In order to get our spending under control, we must actually set spending priorities and put a cohesive plan forward to reduce our national debt. It is bad enough to borrow like there is no tomorrow, but, to do so without even a budget in place is simply wrongheaded.”

H.R. 3778 currently has 18 cosponsors in the House of Representatives and a companion bill (S. 2040) has been introduced in the U.S. Senate by Senator Mike Lee of Utah.

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For Immediate Release:
1 March 2012

Contact:
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Dr. Benishek: “Obama Administration Needs to Fill Inspectors General Posts Now” — Federal IGs Represent Critical Guard Against Fiscal, Ethical Abuses—

WASHINGTON, DC: Commenting on a recently published report on federal Inspectors General (IG), Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today expressed serious concern that “So many of the Administration’s IG offices are vacant, leaving the federal treasury and taxpayers vulnerable.” Benishek’s statement was based on a study by the Project on Government Oversight (POGO), a non-profit organization that tracks government waste and fraud.

The report cited critical vacancies at 12 of 73 statutory agencies including the Departments of State, Justice, Homeland Security and Interior. The POGO report noted that the Administration has not even nominated people for State and Interior.

“The Inspector General position was intended by Congress to serve as a watchdog over federal programs and a guardian against ethical misconduct. For the Administration to leave these key positions open sends a signal the chief executive is not concerned about waste and abuse,” added Dr. Benishek, the former Iron Mountain surgeon.

The IG positions—appointed by the President and confirmed by Congress—were created in the late 1970s as a ‘first-line defense’ against waste and fraud in the federal government.

“Whether it’s the Solyndra scandal or the ‘Fast & Furious’ fiasco at Justice, these matters require aggressive, independent investigating and the IG’s office is often the first place to identify government malfeasance,” added Benishek, a first term representative.

Benishek said he will ask his fellow colleagues to press the Obama Administration in making full use of the IG offices across the Executive Branch. According to POGO, “The longest vacancy has been at the State Department, which has operated more than four years without a permanent inspector general, the website shows. This is at a time when the department has taken on the responsibility of managing private security contractors in war zones.”

“The Administration simply can’t be serious about deficit reduction if it’s not serious about waste and fraud in federal programs. IGs represent a critically important guardian for taxpayer monies and these posts should be filled without delay,” observed the First District Congressman. Founded in 1981, the POGO is a nonpartisan independent watchdog that champions good government reforms. POGO’s investigations into corruption, misconduct, and conflicts of interest achieve a more effective, accountable, open and ethical federal government.

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For Immediate Release:
1 March 2012

Contact:
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Dr. Benishek: “We Need To Protect Access To Hunting, Fishing, and Shooting”
—Lawmaker Applauds Natural Resources Committee for Defending Sportsmen Rights—

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today applauded the passage of the “Sportsman Heritage Act” in the House Committee on Natural Resources. The legislation reaffirms that fishing, hunting, and shooting are important and traditional activities that should continue on public lands.

“I support this legislation because it ensures that our children and grandchildren are able to enjoy hunting and fishing on federal lands now and in the future. I am pleased the Committee on Natural Resources has passed this measure and moved it one step closer to becoming law,” said Dr. Benishek, an avid outdoorsman and lifelong resident of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula.

Title I of the legislation contains the “Recreational Fishing and Hunting Heritage and Opportunities Act,” which Dr. Benishek authored on September 8, 2011. Dr. Benishek’s bill would create an “open until closed” policy for sportsmen’s use of federal land and would block threats from environmentalist groups that seek to limit hunting, fishing and shooting on America’s federal properties.

“From Ontonagon to Escanaba to Alpena, hunters and anglers have enjoyed the blessings of Northern Michigan’s great outdoors for generations. This legislation continues that proud tradition and will protect the rights of First District sportsmen to access federal lands,” added Dr. Benishek, who serves on the House Committee on Natural Resources.

Dr. Benishek’s portion of the bill has received 54 cosponsorships in the House of Representatives. The legislation is supported by organizations such as the U.S. Sportsmen’s Alliance, National Rifle Association, Safari Club International, Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation, and the American Sportfishing Association.

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For Immediate Release:
5 March 2012

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Congressional Essay Contest Open to Northern Michigan Students —Middle School and High School Participants Can Win \$1,000 Prize—

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today encouraged Northern Michigan students to participate in the 2012 “Making Democracy Work Student Essay Contest” sponsored by the United States Capitol Historic Society.

“This contest is an excellent opportunity for Northern Michigan students to express their views and explore ways citizens can be more involved in the democratic process. We have no shortage of bright minds in the First District, so I am confident any of our applicants have a good shot at taking home a prize,” said Benishek, a first term lawmaker from Iron River.

The topic of this year’s contest is “The Role of Informed Citizenship in Making Democracy Work.” Students are asked to write an essay that explores the importance of informed citizens in making the American democratic system work. The contest is open for both middle school and high school students throughout Michigan’s First Congressional District.

Contest Overview:

▪ **Length**

Junior Division: 600 (minimum) to 800 (maximum) words

Senior Division: 800 (minimum) to 1,200 (maximum) words

▪ **Due Date**

June 15, 2012. All submissions must be postmarked or electronically submitted by, June 15, 2012.

▪ **Prizes**

> First Place – \$1,000 & trip to Washington, D.C.

> Second Place – \$500

> Third Place – \$100

> Honorable Mention—The top 50 entries in each division will receive a copy of the book *Understanding Congress* by former Congressman Lee Hamilton.

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For Immediate Release:
7 March 2012

Contact:
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Dr. Benishek To Vote “Yes” On Bipartisan Bill To Spur Job Growth —House Measure Aimed at Helping Entrepreneurs and Small Businesses—

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today announced his intention to vote for the “JOBS (Jumpstart Our Business Startups) Act” (H.R. 3606). This legislative package is designed to create jobs by making it easier for small businesses to raise capital and grow.

“The JOBS Act contains exactly the kind of commonsense, bipartisan initiatives needed to help move Northern Michigan’s economy in the right direction. By making it easier for our small businesses to raise money, job providers in the First District may be able to add an extra worker or two,” said Benishek, a general surgeon and Iron River native.

The “JOBS Act” is comprised of several measures already passed in the House or in committees that are intended to remove federal roadblocks preventing many small businesses from obtaining the capital needed to grow. The components of the bill are designed to spur the growth of startups and small businesses, and pave the way for more small-scale businesses to go public and create more jobs.

“This bill utilizes proposals put forth by both parties and supported by the President. During a time when partisan bickering in Washington has reached a fever pitch, it is encouraging to see a pro-growth legislative package that is supported by both parties,” added Benishek, a first term representative.

The measures included in the “JOBS Act” have broad bipartisan support from Congress, President Obama, and entrepreneurs like Steve Case, the former Chairman and Founder of AOL and a member of the President’s Council on Jobs and Economic Competitiveness.

The Obama Administration has signaled it supports the “JOBS Act.” Office of Management and Budget stated on March 6, 2012, “The President is encouraged to see that there is common ground. The Administration looks forward to continuing to work with the House and the Senate to craft legislation that facilitates capital formation and job growth for small businesses and provides appropriate investor protections.”³

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³ Statement Of Administration Policy, <http://majorityleader.gov/blog/2012/03/white-house-comes-out-in-favor-of-the-jobs-act.html>

For Immediate Release:
14 March 2012

Contact:
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Dr. Benishek: “Filibuster Reform Key To Ending Gridlock In Congress”

—Northern Michigan Congressman Calls for Fix to Partisan Logjam In U.S. Senate—

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) called on the U.S. Senate to reform the filibuster process that has increasingly been used to bring the legislative process in the Senate to a standstill.

“It has become evident the way Congress does business is broken. Both parties are to blame for this problem, but if we work together we can fix it. I believe if a senator wants to filibuster a bill they should have to stand up and actually talk a bill to death, not just threaten it,” said Benishek, a general surgeon from Iron River.

“I’m no expert on Senate procedures, but like most Americans, I know this problem needs to be fixed. I believe the solution is not difficult. If a senator wants to hold hostage the interests of this country, then make them take to the floor and tell everyone why,” added Benishek.

While filibusters have been used throughout much of the last century, they have become much more common. In the first 50 years of the filibuster, it was used only 35 times. In the last two years alone, it was used over 100 times. Filibusters have been widely used while the Senate was controlled by both Republicans and Democrats.⁴

“I believe the American people are tired of the bickering, tired of the gamesmanship, and tired of Congress not getting things done. We have enormous challenges facing this country. We cannot hope to enact the kind of changes needed so long as legislation constantly stalls in the Senate,” added the first term lawmaker.

The filibuster was conceived in the 1800s as a way of blocking a Senate majority from getting its way, by having a senator continually talking on the floor until a majority vote is taken to end debate.⁵ Today, senators are not required to actually talk on the floor to explain their opposition to a bill, they merely have to signal their intent to filibuster and the legislative process grinds to a halt.

Currently, four bills (S.Res.8, S.Res.10, S.Res.12, and S.Res.13) in the U.S. Senate would establish filibuster reform, but none have garnered enough support for passage.

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⁴ The U.S. Senate, http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/reference/cloture_motions/clotureCounts.htm

⁵ Congressional Research Service, <http://www.crs.gov/Products/RL/PDF/RL30360.pdf>

For Immediate Release:
16 March 2012

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Dr. Benishek Announces 2012 First District Art Competition

—Northern Michigan High School Students Can Submit Entries Until April 25th—

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today announced his office is accepting entries for the 2012 Congressional Art Competition in Michigan’s First District. This annual contest is open to all high school students in the First District. The winning piece of art will be displayed for one year in the U.S. Capitol Complex.

“There are plenty of gifted young artists in Northern Michigan and this competition will be a great way to showcase their talents. We are looking forward to seeing all of the entries in the coming weeks and displaying the winning piece in the Capitol for the next year,” said Benishek, a general surgeon and Iron River native.

The overall District winner will be named on May 7, 2012. Because of the sprawling geography of the First District, students are encouraged to photograph their artwork and submit their entry electronically at www.benishek.house.gov.

Guidelines for the contest are as follows:

1. All artwork must be submitted by **Wednesday, April 25, 2012**.
2. Artwork must be two-dimensional.
3. Each piece can be no larger than 28” x 28” x 4” (28 inches high, 28 inches wide, and 4 inches deep), including the frame. If your artwork is selected as the winning piece, it will be required to be framed and must adhere to the size guidelines. Artwork cannot weigh more than 15 lbs.
4. Accepted media for artwork:
 - > Paintings: oil, acrylics, watercolor, etc.
 - > Drawings: pastels, pencil, charcoal, ink, markers
 - > Prints: lithographs, silkscreen, block prints
 - > Mixed Media: Two media such as pencil, ink, watercolor, etc.
 - > Computer-Generated Art
 - > Photography

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For Immediate Release:
19 March 2012

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Dr. Benishek Applauds President Obama's Plan To Protect Internet Privacy —Lawmaker Favors Administration's Plan for Online Consumer Safeguards—

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) applauded the Obama Administration's request for a "Consumer Privacy Bill of Rights," to protect the privacy of online consumers and to ensure economic growth through the Internet.

"President Obama has made the right decision by asking for a set of privacy rules to protect online consumers. In an age of Facebook, Twitter and Gmail, it is more important now than ever that personal information be protected. Northern Michiganders use the Internet every day for recreation and commerce, and they deserve a clear set of privacy protections," said Benishek, a general surgeon and Iron River native.

The Administration's "Consumer Privacy Bill of Rights" is designed to provide clear protections for consumers and greater certainty for businesses. The initiative is based on seven basic principles:

- **Transparency:** Consumers have a right to easily understandable information about privacy and security practices.
- **Individual Control:** Consumers have a right to exercise control over what personal data organizations collect from them and how they use it.
- **Respect for Context:** Consumers have a right to expect that organizations will collect, use, and disclose personal data in ways that are consistent with the context in which consumers provide the data.
- **Security:** Consumers have a right to secure and responsible handling of personal data.
- **Access and Accuracy:** Consumers have a right to access and correct personal data in usable formats.
- **Focused Collection:** Consumers have a right to reasonable limits on the personal data that companies collect and retain.
- **Accountability:** Consumers have a right to have personal data handled by companies with appropriate measures in place to assure they adhere to the Consumer Privacy Bill of Rights.

"These measures represent the kind of commonsense safeguards needed for the millions of Americans using the Internet every day. I am hopeful Congress will pass legislation that embraces the goals of this plan and deliver it to the President's desk for signature," added Benishek.

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For Immediate Release:
23 March 2012

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Herron Area Senior Appointed To U.S. Naval Academy

—Alpena High School Student to Attend Annapolis Naval College This Summer—

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today announced that Luke Donald of Herron has been named to the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland.

“I am very honored that Dr. Benishek's office chose to nominate me for the Naval Academy. There are many qualified candidates in our area, so I view this as a great honor. Serving our country by attending the Naval Academy would be a privilege to anyone with an opportunity like this ahead of them,” said Luke Donald.

“Luke certainly deserves this honor based on his accomplishments both at school and in his community. With his top-caliber record, we know Luke will be an excellent addition to the U.S. Navy and the Naval Academy,” said Benishek, a general surgeon from Iron Mountain.

Donald is a resident of Herron in Alpena County, Michigan. Donald has attended Alpena High School since 2008 and has a cumulative GPA of 3.9 and is in the top 10 percent of his graduating class. While in high school, Donald has been involved in numerous extracurricular activities including, National Honor Society, History Club, Senior Planning Team, and the Northeast Michigan Youth Advisory Council. He has also been involved in many school sports including, tennis, wrestling, cross country, and track and field.

Donald applied for a nomination through Congressman Benishek’s office and was interviewed by an advisory board in Gaylord on November 3, 2011. He was offered appointment by the Naval Academy on March 15, 2012. Donald is scheduled to graduate from Alpena High School in June of 2012 and will begin his education at the Naval Academy this summer.

“I believe Luke has a very bright future ahead of him as he serves our country in the coming years. His family and friends should be deservedly proud of his accomplishments. We wish Luke the best of luck at the Naval Academy,” added Benishek.

Founded in 1845, the Naval Academy in Annapolis has approximately 4,400 undergraduates.⁶ The Naval Academy has an average acceptance rate of 8.4 percent.⁷

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⁶ U.S. Naval Academy, <http://www.usna.edu/about.htm>

⁷ U.S. News & World Report, <http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-colleges/naval-academy-2101>

For Immediate Release:
17 April 2012

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Dr. Benishek To Vote ‘Yes’ On Legislation To Protect Sportsmen Rights —Proposal Contains Dr. Benishek’s Bill To Ensure Sportsmen Access to Federal Land—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today announced his support for the “Sportsman Heritage Act” (H.R. 4089), a measure that will protect access to hunting, fishing, and recreational shooting on federal lands.

“This initiative reflects my belief that it is critical to protect the rights of sportsmen in our area. Like many in the First District, I have enjoyed hunting and fishing in Northern Michigan all of my life. I want to make sure these activities are protected for future generations of Northern Michiganders,” said Dr. Benishek, an Iron River native and lifelong resident of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula.

Dr. Benishek authored a component of the bill that would create an “open until closed” policy for sportsmens’ use of federal land and would block environmentalist groups from limiting hunting, fishing and shooting on America’s federal properties. The legislation would limit these threats to sportsmens’ access by directing federal agencies to exercise their land management discretion to facilitate these activities, subject to other applicable laws.

“There are few things in life I enjoy more than going grouse hunting at my camp in the Ottawa National Forest, or trout fishing in the Paint River. Hunting, fishing, and shooting sports are an important part of Northern Michigan’s heritage and access to these activities needs to be protected,” added Dr. Benishek, who serves on the House Committee on Natural Resources.

The initiative to protect sportsmen rights on federal lands is supported by organizations such as the U.S. Sportsmen’s Alliance, National Rifle Association, Safari Club International, Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation, and the American Sportfishing Association.

Title I of the bill contains language of legislation Dr. Benishek authored in September of 2011. The “Sportsman Heritage Act” is scheduled for a vote in the House of Representatives on April 17, 2012.

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For Immediate Release:
19 April 2012

Contact:
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Dr. Benishek Voted In Support of Small Business Tax Cut Act
-- Northern Michigan Small Business Owners Still Facing Uncertainty --

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today voted in support of the Small Business Tax Cut Act of 2012.

“Everywhere I travel in Michigan’s First Congressional District, I am continually reminded of the uncertainty that exists during our current economic situation,” said Dr. Benishek. “Business owners tell me they can’t hire more workers or boost production because they need to account for the financial impact of the President’s health care law or the Environmental Protection Agency’s burdensome regulations.”

The Small Business Tax Cut is available to all small businesses with fewer than 500 employees. The tax cut is not specific to one particular agency and instead focuses on the fact that America’s small businesses are in need of economic certainty before they can once again prosper. The Joint Committee on Taxation states that this bill will reduce taxes on small businesses by \$45.9 billion over 10 years.

“Jobs are of utmost importance right now, and I am committed to helping businesses in Northern Michigan grow so that we can move toward a path of prosperity once again,” added Dr. Benishek.

The bill was passed in the House, by a margin 235-173.

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For Immediate Release:
23 April 2012

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Harbor Springs Graduate Appointed To U.S. Air Force Academy

—New Mexico Military Institute Student to Attend Colorado Springs Military School—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today announced that Domenic Troilo has been appointed to the U.S. Air Force Academy. Troilo, a resident of Michigan’s First Congressional District, is currently attending the New Mexico Military Institute.

“This is a great opportunity for Domenic,” said Dr. Benishek, a physician from Iron River. “I have no doubt that Domenic will excel at the Air Force Academy. He has been a leader both in and out of the classroom.”

Troilo has attended the New Mexico Military Institute since Fall 2011, to prepare for the U.S. Air Force Academy. Prior to the institute, Troilo attended Harbor Springs High School, graduating in June 2011. Troilo graduated 11th of 79 students in Harbor Springs with a cumulative GPA of 3.79.

While in high school, Troilo was involved in numerous extracurricular activities, including: National Honor Society, numerous bands affiliated with the high school and Michigan Youth in Government. He has also played several high school sports, including football, track and golf. Troilo was nominated to the Air Force Academy on November 18, 2011, following an interview with Dr. Benishek’s advisory panel on November 3, 2011. Troilo was offered an appointment to the Academy on March 22, 2012.

“Both Domenic and his family should be very proud of this appointment. We wish Domenic the best of luck in the U.S. Air Force Academy and beyond,” added Dr. Benishek.

The U.S. Air Force Academy was established in 1954 in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and has approximately 4,400 cadets. Over the past five decades, the Academy has graduated over 37,000 military officers.⁸

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⁸ U.S. Air Force Academy, <http://www.usafa.af.mil/information/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=9409>

For Immediate Release:
24 April 2012

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Dr. Benishek: “Review of President’s Budget Confirms It Is Bad Policy”

—Non-Partisan Review States President’s Budget Would Stunt Economic Growth—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today commented on a recent report by the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) that states President Obama’s FY 2013 budget plan would slow economic growth in America.

“This report confirms that the Administration’s budget plan will shrink our country’s economy while increasing the size of the federal government. With unemployment above eight percent nationally and even higher in Northern Michigan, the last thing we should do is enact policies that will hurt economic growth,” said Dr. Benishek, a native of Iron River and a doctor who worked in the Iron Mountain area for three decades.

The CBO report, released on April 20, 2012, indicates that President Obama’s budget plan would shrink the nation’s economy by as much as 2.2 percent in the long term. According to the report, such an economic slowdown would fuel even higher federal deficits which are projected with the President’s budget plan. The budget proposal put forward by the White House in February 2012, increases taxes while adding \$11 trillion more to the federal debt by 2022.⁹

“This CBO analysis underscores that the budgetary process in Washington is broken. The President’s budget was voted down in the House without a single vote of support, and the Senate has not passed a budget of their own in over three years. We need real solutions and real leadership from the White House and the Senate, not more spending and more debt,” added Dr. Benishek.

“I supported the House budget plan because I believe it forces the government to live within its means and eventually allows for a balanced budget. I am not a budgetary expert, but I am confident that the best way to improve our nation’s fiscal standing and spur economic growth is to reduce the federal debt, keep taxes low, and shrink the size of the federal government,” stated Dr. Benishek.

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⁹ House Committee on the Budget, www.budget.house.gov

For Immediate Release:
25 April 2012

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Dr. Benishek Supports Announcement on Protecting VA Health Care —Pushes for Passage of Protect VA Healthcare Act—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today issued the following statement after the Office of Management and Budget's announcement that VA health care is exempt from budget cuts:

"This is a step in the right direction in ensuring that Northern Michigan's veterans receive the health care they deserve. While our country faces serious financial challenges, I do not believe we should balance the budget on the backs of our veterans.

I am a proud sponsor of the Protect VA Healthcare Act of 2012 (H.R. 3895), key legislation that will take this decision a step further. America's veterans are a brave group and it is well past time that we protect the benefits that they have earned and deserve."

H.R. 3895 is currently before the House Committee on the Budget.

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For Immediate Release:
30 April 2012

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Dr. Benishek: “Finally the Administration’s Bureaucrats Have Come to Their Senses”
—Northern Michigan Doctor Praises Withdraw of Overzealous Agriculture Regulation—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today commented on the U.S. Department of Labor’s recent decision to withdraw a new proposed regulation that would limit children who work in local agriculture.

“I am pleased that the Administration and Department of Labor has decided to scrap this ill-conceived new regulation. It’s encouraging to see Washington bureaucrats finally listening to our nation’s farmers. I am supportive of measures that protect children in the workplace, but this measure simply ran against common sense,” said Dr. Benishek, a lifelong resident of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula and a medical doctor for three decades.

First introduced by the Department of Labor on August 31, 2011, this new ruling would have applied child labor laws to children and family members of farmers. The regulation would have prohibited children from doing chores and basic agricultural tasks such as working with livestock, applying pesticides and operating tractors.¹⁰

“While travelling in Northern Michigan, I have met with local farmers who have expressed their deep concern over this ridiculous proposed ruling. Northern Michigan young people have been intricately involved in family farms for generations and to threaten that relationship is simply wrong,” added Dr. Benishek.

Last week, the U.S Department of Labor announced that it would be withdrawing the proposed ruling. During a public comment period late last year, the Department received feedback from more than 500 Michigan farmers regarding the ruling.¹¹

“Farmers in Northern Michigan and across America have spoken out against this idea and fortunately their voices have been heard. These types of ridiculous ideas from Washington are exactly the type of federal regulations that limit our freedom and hurt our country’s economy,” stated Dr. Benishek.

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¹⁰ U.S. Department of Labor, www.labor.gov

¹¹ Michigan Farm Bureau, <http://www.michfb.com/agrinotes/index/289/2478>

For Immediate Release:
2 May 2012

Contact:
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Dr. Benishek Supports Bill To Help Northern Michigan Veterans Find Jobs —Legislation Aimed At Increasing Employment Among Veteran Job Seekers—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today endorsed the “Helping Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans Return to Employment (HIRE) at Home Act (H.R. 4115),” a measure that will help military veterans find work when they return to civilian life.

“As a doctor who worked in a VA hospital for 25 years, I believe ensuring our veterans have employment opportunities when they return home should be of the utmost importance. In this tough economy, we need to make every effort to help Northern Michigan’s veterans find good paying jobs,” said Dr. Benishek, a VA doctor from Iron River and Michigan’s sole member of the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

The “HIRE at Home Act” would require states to recognize military training when granting certification for private-sector positions such as emergency medical technicians, state-tested nursing assistants, certified nursing assistants, registered nurses, and commercial truck drivers. The initiative would achieve this by requiring states to take past military training into account in order to continue receiving certain grants.

“Our veterans have done an amazing job while serving this nation overseas and I am completely confident they can perform just as well in the workplace. As a member of the Veterans’ Affairs Committee, I have had the extraordinary privilege to travel to Afghanistan and visit with our men and women in uniform. I know if given the proper training and opportunity, our nation’s veterans will excel in any job,” added Benishek, the father of an Afghan War veteran.

As of December 2011, the unemployment among military veterans aged 18-24 stood at 31 percent, almost eight times higher than the national average.¹²

The “Helping Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans Return to Employment (HIRE) at Home Act (H.R. 4115),” was authored by Rep. Steve Stivers (OH-15) and currently has 17 cosponsors and is supported by the American Legion.

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¹² U.S. Department of Labor, www.labor.gov

For Immediate Release:
2 May 2012

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Dr. Benishek: “Deal for Cheboygan Hospital is good news for Northern Michigan”

-- Statement of Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) --

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) issued the following statement following the news that McLaren Health Care finalized its deal with CMS to purchase the Cheboygan Memorial Hospital:

“I am pleased to hear that McLaren Health Care has finalized all of the regulatory and business issues that were contained in the final agreement to complete the purchase of Cheboygan Memorial Hospital. My staff and I have spent the last three months working with government regulatory agencies, and local and state officials, to facilitate the process for the hospital to stay open. My priority has been for the citizens of Cheboygan to have local access to health care. We are happy to hear that emergency and surgical operations will be restored. As a doctor for nearly 30 years, I understand the importance of local access to health care for Cheboygan's citizens and I will continue to offer all possible assistance to the area's residents as this process moves forward.”

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For Immediate Release:
4 May 2012

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Dr. Benishek Supports Measure to Protect the Unborn
-- Bill Will Prevent Abortions Based on Race and Sex of Baby --

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) announced his support of H.R. 3541, the "Prenatal Nondiscrimination Act" (PRENDA).

"A baby is a gift from God," said Dr. Benishek. "I believe all life is precious – there is no barrier based on gender or race."

PRENDA, a bipartisan bill, will ban the abortions of babies based on their gender or race. A study published in the April 2008 Journal of the National Academy of Sciences shows that sex- and race-selection is happening in the U.S. at an alarming rate.

"I've worked as a doctor for nearly 30 years and will continue to advocate for pro-life policies," added Dr. Benishek.

PRENDA was introduced by Congressman Trent Franks (AZ-02) and currently has 95 cosponsors, including Dr. Benishek. The bill was voted on in the House Committee on the Judiciary on February 16, 2012.

Following its committee passage, Congressman Franks said, "I am convinced this is the civil rights battle that will define our generation, and, by the grace of God, I look forward to this vital measure's consideration on the House floor and its ultimate passage."

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For Immediate Release:
8 May 2012

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Dr. Benishek Holds Live Call With Northern Michigan Veterans

—VA Doctor Joined By Veterans’ Affairs Committee Chairman On District Wide Call—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) and Rep. Jeff Miller (FL-01), Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, recently held a joint conference call with thousands of Northern Michigan military veterans.

“As a doctor who worked in a VA hospital for 20 years, it was a great opportunity to speak with many of Northern Michigan’s veterans. I want to thank Chairman Miller for his leadership on the Committee and for his participation in this call. The Chairman was able to give many of our veterans his insight and expertise on important veterans’ issues,” said Dr. Benishek, a doctor from Iron River who worked at the Iron Mountain VA Center for 20 years.

“I want to thank my good friend, and fellow Veterans’ Affairs Committee Member, for hosting last evening’s teletownhall with the veterans of Northern Michigan,” stated Rep. Jeff Miller, Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

“This call was a great way to get feedback from our area’s veterans and I sincerely value their input. I remain committed to doing all I can to help those who served in uniform,” stated Benishek, who serves as Michigan’s sole member of the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

The conference call allowed veterans throughout Michigan’s First Congressional District to speak live with both their elected representative and the Veterans’ Affairs Committee Chairman. Dr. Benishek and Chairman Miller fielded a wide array of questions during the call and were able to speak directly with veterans on issues of interest in Northern Michigan.

“It was evident that our veterans are concerned about the VA bureaucracy and want to make sure the many veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan receive the care they need. These are items the VA is doing, but needs to be doing better. A common area of distress is the painfully long time it takes veterans to receive the benefits they earned. In response, I am currently looking at ways we can ease this ‘backlog’ and improve care for our nation’s heroes,” added Benishek.

“Veterans have a lot of questions concerning their care and access from VA in these tough economic times. Let me assure everyone, veterans are, and always will be, a priority for this nation,” added Miller.

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For Immediate Release:
24 May 2012

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Dr. Benishek Launches Plan To Improve Veterans Claims Backlog -- Northern Michigan Lawmaker Seeks Input From Local Veterans --

WASHINGTON, DC: Earlier today, Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) held his second of two public forums with Northern Michigan veterans to introduce a plan aimed at easing the claims backlog of the Veterans' Administration (VA).

"Northern Michigan veterans deserve timely access to the benefits they have earned. This week, we have introduced a common sense plan that I believe will help the men and women in uniform who have served this country," said Dr. Benishek, a doctor who worked at the Iron Mountain VA center for 20 years. "I was privileged to hold meetings with our local veterans and get their feedback on how we can best address this challenge."

"I just want to thank Dr. Benishek for giving us the opportunity to discuss issues related to the disability claims backlog. This is the first time anyone has cared enough to take an interest in addressing and fixing these problems," said Chuck Lantz, a Dickinson County Veteran Service Officer (VSO) who attended the public forum in Iron Mountain.

Dr. Benishek's plan has three main components—making a seamless transition for soldiers into the VA, simplifying and streamlining the way veterans receive their benefits, and improving access for veterans. The plan calls for the VA to speed up claims processing by immediately disbursing benefits for simple disabilities so long as proper evidence is determined to be adequate. The VA would then continue to develop the rest of the claim which may require additional evidence.

"We have learned a lot about the benefits backlog over the last year, but there is no better way to learn about this challenge than to have a direct conversation with our area's veterans. I'd like to thank everyone who participated in these public meetings. We will use their input in moving forward with the initiatives in this plan," added Dr. Benishek, Michigan's sole representative on the Veterans' Affairs committee.

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For Immediate Release:
30 May 2012

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Dr. Benishek To Support Bill To Encourage Medical Innovation --Legislation Will Reauthorize FDA's User Fee Programs--

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today announced he will vote in favor of the "Food and Drug Administration Reform Act" (H.R. 5651), a bill to reauthorize Food and Drug Administration (FDA) user fee programs and encourage the approval of life-saving drugs and medical devices.

"I have spent my career treating patients so I know the important need for innovation in drugs and medical devices. I believe doctors and patients in Northern Michigan want this country to remain on the cutting edge of medical innovation. For years, America has been the medical innovation capital of the world, and this bill allows us to continue to lead," said Dr. Benishek, a doctor from Iron River.

The FDA Reform Act will reauthorize FDA user fee programs for drug companies, while implementing new user fee programs for generic drugs. The goal of these reauthorizations is to ensure the timely review and approval of life-saving and live-improving drugs and medical devices. This will work to prevent more of the American drug and device industry from moving overseas.

This legislation also contains a provision to assist hospitals, doctors, and nurses with dangerous drug shortages. The bill contains language that would require the FDA to inform the American public through a drug shortages list and expedite the approval of important drugs in need.

"I am pleased this legislation will alleviate critical drug shortages. I have treated patients for my entire adult life, so I understand how important it is for patients to have access to the medicines they need," added Dr. Benishek.

The "FDA Reform Act" is important to the American economy. According to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, 2 million jobs are supported by the U.S. medical device industry. The average worker who works in the device industry earns an average of \$60,000 per year.¹³

"With unemployment in Northern Michigan higher than the national average of 8 percent and the health care industry playing such an important role in our economy, it is vital that we keep these jobs in areas like Northern Michigan and not let them move overseas," observed Dr. Benishek.

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¹³ House Committee on Energy and Commerce, www.energycommerce.house.gov

For Immediate Release:
5 June 2012

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Dr. Benishek: “President’s Health Care Law Not Lowering Costs” —New Study Predicts Health Care Premiums Will Rise 7.5 Percent in 2013—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today commented on a new study by PriceWaterhouseCoopers that predicts medical costs will increase by 7.5 percent in 2013, despite the passage of the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA)* two years ago.

“This report is further evidence that the President’s Health Care Law is bad medicine for Northern Michiganders. When President Obama was trying to sell this plan he promised it would lower health care premiums by \$2,500 this year—that hasn’t happened. Instead, costs are going up. As a doctor, I believe we need to repeal this law and enact common sense reforms that give patients more control over their health care,” said Dr. Benishek, who worked as a surgeon in Iron Mountain for 28 years.

The new study, issued by PriceWaterhouseCoopers, predicts a 7.5 percent increase in health care spending. According to a report from Reuters, the study indicates the trend in health care spending is “more than three times the projected rates for inflation and economic growth.”¹⁴

“With economic growth stagnant, higher health care premiums will take more money out of the pockets of Northern Michigan families. I fear these increases will also hurt economic growth. Local job providers are telling me they are worried about the rising costs of health care and what these trends will do to their businesses,” added Dr. Benishek.

Health care costs represent a significant expenditure for American families. According to the Milliman Medical Index (MMI), the total cost of healthcare for a typical family of four was \$19,393 in 2011. This figure represents a 7.3 percent increase from 2010, and a doubling in cost from less than a decade ago, despite the passage of the Affordable Care Act.¹⁵

“After treating patients for nearly 30 years, I believe we need to apply free market principles to increase competition and lower costs in the health care system. Since coming to Congress, I have supported initiatives to let people purchase health insurance across state lines, allow small businesses to join together to purchase more affordable insurance, and encourage more innovation in medical technologies,” said Dr. Benishek.¹⁶

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¹⁴ Reuters, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/05/31/us-usa-healthcare-costs-idUSBRE84U05620120531>

¹⁵ Milliman Medical Index 2011, <http://publications.milliman.com/periodicals/mmi/pdfs/milliman-medical-index-2011.pdf>

¹⁶ H.R. 3000: “Empowering Patients First Act,” H.R.5651 “Food and Drug Administration Reform Act”

For Immediate Release:
6 June 2012

Contact:
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Manistique Student Wins 2012 Congressional Art Competition

--High School Graduate's Artwork Will Be Displayed in U.S. Capitol For One Year--

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today announced that Nicole Lindquist, a recent graduate of Manistique High School, has won the 2012 Congressional Art Competition in the First District. Lindquist's artwork will be displayed at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, DC, for one year.

"I am so grateful and excited to receive this award. I couldn't have done it without my amazing brother and parents, and without the guidance of my inspiring art teacher, Ms. Robin Mulligan. Art is my passion, so receiving this recognition is a true honor," said Nicole Lindquist.

Lindquist's winning entry is a 26 by 20 inch acrylic painting titled "Jeremy." The artwork was based on a photograph of Lindquist's brother taken during a family vacation to New York City. Lindquist's painting competed against artwork including paintings, drawings, and photographs from all over the First Congressional District. The winning artwork will be displayed in an exhibit at the Capitol Complex, which opens in June.

"I am blown away by the intelligence and talent of many students. To have a student as gifted as Nicole and for her to receive this honor makes me proud to be a teacher," said Robin Mulligan, Lindquist's art teacher at Manistique High School.

"We are pleased to have Nicole's artwork representing Northern Michigan in the U.S. Capitol for the next year. Nicole's work is emblematic of the many talented young artists in the First District. We wish to thank all those who participated in the contest, and we wish Nicole the very best in her future endeavors," said Dr. Benishek, a doctor from Iron River serving in his first term in Congress.

The Congressional Art Contest has been held annually for the last 31 years and is sponsored by the Congressional Institute. If you want to learn more about the contest, please go to www.conginst.org for more details.

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For Immediate Release:
6 June 2012

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Dr. Benishek Supports Bill To Prevent Job-Killing Tax Hikes On Medical Innovators —Legislation Will Stop 2.3% Tax Increase On Medical Device Manufacturers—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today announced his support for the “Protect Medical Innovation Act of 2011” (H.R. 436), a bill that eliminates a new \$29 billion excise tax on medical devices imposed by President Obama’s health care law.

“This impending tax increase will hurt Northern Michigan’s economy. With economic growth sluggish and jobs hard to come by, it makes no sense to increase the tax burden on local job providers. There are medical device businesses in Northern Michigan that employ hundreds of people. These job providers should not be punished to pay for President Obama’s health care plan,” said Dr. Benishek, a doctor from Iron River.

The “Protect Medical Innovation Act of 2011” will repeal a 2.3 percent tax that is scheduled to be imposed on the sale of medical devices on January 1, 2013. As a result of this tax, it is expected that medical device manufacturers will pass on the cost of this tax increase to their buyers and thus increase the costs of health care.

“Sadly, I see this as a tax on medical innovation. After treating patients in Northern Michigan all of my career, I do not want our nation’s innovators to have to lay off workers and possibly move their business overseas. We need to reward medical innovators, not penalize them,” added Dr. Benishek, who worked in Iron Mountain as a doctor 28 years.

Medical device manufacturers are already beginning to brace themselves for this impending tax increase. Reports indicate Stryker Corporation, based in Kalamazoo, announced it would be laying off 1,000 workers, blaming the new tax for the job losses.¹⁷

“The President claimed his health care law would lower costs, but this tax hike has the potential to increase health care costs for everyone. We need a different approach. I recommend we enact free-market reforms such as letting people purchase health insurance across state lines, encouraging medical innovations and allowing patients more flexibility to decide on how their health care dollars are spent,” stated Dr. Benishek.

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¹⁷ <http://www.forbes.com/sites/aroy/2012/06/04/the-medical-device-tax-killing-jobs-and-raising-premiums/>

For Immediate Release:
13 June 2012

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Dr. Benishek Stresses Need to Reduce the Federal Debt and Grow the Economy --Non-Partisan Report Warns of 'Fiscal Crisis' Unless Action Is Taken—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today commented on a recent report from the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) that warns of significant economic decline and unsustainable levels government debt in the next decade.

"This report underscores the need for significant fiscal reforms in our federal government. The CBO's findings, along with the bleak jobs report, are evidence that changes need to be made. I'm a doctor, not a professional politician, but like many in Northern Michigan, I know this country needs to change course," said Dr. Benishek, a freshman lawmaker from Iron River.

The Congressional Budget Office's "Long-Term Budget Outlook" predicts significant fiscal and economic consequences unless action is taken. The report states that "growing debt also would increase the probability of a sudden fiscal crisis, during which investors would lose confidence in the government's ability to manage its budget."¹⁸

"We need to retool our fiscal policy now. Let's reduce the government's deficits, shrink the size of government and reform the federal tax code. The record levels of borrowing, spending and debt are hurting Northern Michigan's economy. Unless our nation's job providers get some certainty coming from the federal government, we cannot expect to see them start hiring again," added Dr. Benishek.

"The President recently claimed 'the private sector is doing fine.' But it's not. And it's not fine because the federal government is standing in the way of private sector job growth. Who wants to invest in the economy if they don't know what their taxes will be next year or whether the federal government will be able to meet its financial obligations? We need to make the changes that will actually grow the economy and let our kids have a chance at the American Dream," stated Dr. Benishek.

The CBO report projects that government spending as a share of the economy will increase by 53 percent by 2037. At \$15.7 trillion, the national debt has already eclipsed the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and the CBO study suggests that the debt held by the public will eclipse the size of the economy by 2022.¹⁹

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¹⁸ Congressional Budget Office (CBO), The Long-term Budget Outlook, <http://cbo.gov/publication/43288>

¹⁹ Congressional Budget Office (CBO), The Long-term Budget Outlook, <http://cbo.gov/publication/43288>

For Immediate Release:
14 June 2012

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Dr. Benishek: “Keeping Taxes Low Will Grow the Economy”

--Northern Michigan Lawmaker Calls for Keeping Taxes Low on Job Providers--

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today expressed his support of an extension of the current federal tax rates through next year to provide certainty to Northern Michigan’s job creators.

“Keeping taxes low for our job-providers will help Northern Michigan’s economy. I have visited business owners all over the First District and they are telling me that higher taxes will hurt their companies. We need to provide some economic certainty for our job creators as soon as possible,” said Dr. Benishek, a doctor in Iron Mountain for 28 years.

Unless action is taken by the President and Congress, the tax rates put in place in 2001 and 2003 will expire on January 1, 2013. The result will be a tax increase of \$165 billion on the American people. According to the Congressional Research Service (CRS), a Northern Michigan family of four earning \$30,000 per year will see their taxes increase by \$2,310 if Congress does not act to extend the current tax rates.²⁰

“Recently, former President Bill Clinton announced his support for maintaining the current tax rates. He was right to point out that tax increases will crush our country’s economic growth. I am hopeful President Obama and my colleagues in Congress will vote with me to prevent the job-killing taxes increases that will come at the end of this year if we don’t act,” added Dr. Benishek.

A recent report from the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) warned of economic consequences if the current tax rate is not extended. The report asserts that, “higher tax rates would discourage people from working and saving, further reducing output and income.”²¹

“With the economy struggling, Northern Michigan families and business owners can’t afford a tax hike. As a doctor who ran a small business, I know this looming threat is fueling the flames of economic uncertainty. I believe Congress and the Administration must stop these impending tax increases now,” stated Dr. Benishek.

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²⁰ Congressional Research Service (CRS), www.crs.gov

²¹ Congressional Budget Office (CBO), The Long-term Budget Outlook, <http://cbo.gov/publication/43288>

For Immediate Release:
21 June 2012

Contact:
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Dr. Benishek: “Lower Gas Prices Will Help Northern Michigan Families”
—Northern Michigan Doctor Supports Bill to Grow Domestic Energy Production—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today supported the “Domestic Energy and Jobs Act” (H.R. 4480), a bill aimed at lowering gas prices by requiring more domestic energy production when the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) is tapped, streamlining the permitting process for energy production and allowing for more development of energy resources on federal lands.

“High gas prices are hurting Northern Michigan families and small businesses. Every dollar spent at the gas pump is one that a family is not able to save for their kids’ future. Every dollar our small businesses spend on gas is one less dollar that they can use to expand their business. To me, it only makes sense to responsibly utilize the natural resources we have here at home,” said Dr. Benishek, a surgeon from Iron River.

The “Domestic Energy and Jobs Act” has several components aimed at encouraging responsible new energy production. The legislation will require any use of the SPR to be offset by an equal increase in domestic energy production, while maintaining the ability to respond to a national emergency. This bill will also support more energy development on federal lands by having the Department of the Interior establish goals for federal land energy production to meet the needs of American consumers. Additionally, the legislation streamlines the process for energy permitting from the federal government to encourage timely approval of new energy development projects.

“The federal government should be encouraging responsible energy production and decreasing our dependency on foreign oil, not standing in the way of it. This legislation doesn’t impact our parks or wilderness areas, it simply allows for reasonable development of the many natural resources found in this country,” said Dr. Benishek, who serves on the House Committee on Natural Resources.

The legislation passed the House of Representatives with a bipartisan vote of 248-163.

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For Immediate Release:
28 June 2012

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Dr. Benishek Comments on House Vote to Hold Attorney General in Contempt of Congress —Statement of Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01)—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today released the following statement in support of the House of Representatives' vote to hold Attorney General Eric Holder in contempt of Congress for failing to supply adequate information on the "Fast and Furious" investigation:

"Today's vote to hold Attorney General Eric Holder in contempt of Congress is the result of the Justice Department stonewalling the House's efforts to learn the truth about the botched gun walker program known as 'Fast and Furious.' This reckless operation led to the death of Michigan native Brian Terry. I believe both the family of Brian Terry and the American people deserve to know the truth about what happened. We have given the Justice Department 18 months to comply, but instead the Attorney General has chosen to block Congress' investigation. I am hopeful that following today's vote, the Administration will resolve this issue by finally cooperating with Congress, shed light on what really happened in this program and ensure nothing like this ever happens again."

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For Immediate Release:
28 June 2012

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Dr. Benishek Comments On Supreme Court's Ruling on the President's Health Care Law

—Statement of Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01)—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today released the following statement after the U.S. Supreme Court announced its ruling on President Obama's health care law, the "Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act" (PPACA):

"The Supreme Court's decision to uphold President Obama's health care law is devastating news for Northern Michigan and all of America. As a doctor who treated patients for 30 years, I know the President's plan is not solving our health care problems. In fact, it is making them worse.

The promises the President made about his law have not come true. He promised the law would lower costs, but it hasn't. He promised individuals would be able to stay on their current health care plan, but millions may lose their employer-provided insurance. He promised the law would improve the economy, but it hasn't.

There is no way to 'fix' this law. It needs to be fully repealed. A full repeal is our only opportunity to enact health care reforms the right way. Health care is becoming prohibitively expensive for too many Northern Michiganders. We have to fix that. But instead of passing a 2,700-page bill that no one understands, let's take our time and have an honest conversation with the American people about how best to answer our health care challenges.

I am confident in the coming months the House Majority will continue working to repeal this terrible law. A full repeal will give us a chance to finally enact health care reform the way it should be done—by talking to the American people and learning their ideas on how to make health care more affordable, more efficient, and more accessible for everyone."

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For Immediate Release:
11 July 2012

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Dr. Benishek Again Supports Full Repeal of President's Health Care Law

—Statement of Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01)—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today released the following statement in support of the vote of the House of Representatives to repeal President Obama's health care law, the "Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act" (PPACA):

"The Supreme Court's recent ruling upholding the President's health care law is a reminder that we cannot rely on our courts to fix the mistakes of Congress. As a doctor in Michigan's Upper Peninsula for 30 years, I know the President's law cannot be 'fixed.' This law must be fully repealed.

Despite much soaring rhetoric, the President's law never addressed the real challenges of health care in this country. America has a great health care system, but it costs too much. Instead of putting Washington in charge of patient care, I recommend that we enact a step-by-step approach that lowers costs through free-market competition and strengthens the doctor-patient relationship.

Ultimately, the fate of the President's health care law will have to be decided by the American people. Today's vote will offer the White House and the Senate another opportunity to do what the majority of American people are demanding: scrap this law and begin to enact real health care reforms that lower costs and improve access to care."

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For Immediate Release:
12 July 2012

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Dr. Benishek Votes ‘Yes’ On Bill To Promote Mining Jobs

—Legislation Will Reduce Government Roadblocks and Expand Mineral Production—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today voted in support of the “National Strategic and Critical Minerals Protection Act” (H.R. 4402), a bill aimed at expediting American mineral production by reducing federal bureaucratic roadblocks to create new mining jobs.

“Mining has long been the foundation of Northern Michigan’s economy and the creation of new mines in our area holds the potential for creating many good paying jobs. The First District is blessed with abundant natural resources. I believe we can responsibly utilize our mineral wealth to create jobs and grow Northern Michigan’s economy,” said Dr. Benishek, a doctor from Iron River and lifelong resident of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula.

The “National Strategic and Critical Minerals Protection Act” is designed to speed up the federal government’s permitting process for our nation’s mineral resources, including rare earth elements that are vital to job creation and American economic competitiveness. Due to lawsuits and government inefficiency, the current process of acquiring all government permits required for a mineral production project can take more than a decade. H.R. 4402 expedites this process by setting the total review process for permitting at 30 months and setting a 60-day time limit for opponents to file a legal challenge to a new mining project.

“Bureaucratic roadblocks and Washington’s inefficiency should not stand in the way of economic growth in Northern Michigan or anywhere in this country. By eliminating federal red tape and speeding up the permitting process, we can allow mining to flourish in a way that protects our environment while providing good paying new jobs for Northern Michiganders,” added Dr. Benishek, a member of the House Committee on Natural Resources.

The “National Strategic and Critical Minerals Protection Act” (H.R. 4402) passed the House of Representatives on July 12, 2012, by a vote bipartisan vote of 256 to 160.

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For Immediate Release:
13 July 2012

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Dr. Benishek: “Disaster Assistance Available For Michigan Farmers”

—Northern Michigan Lawmaker Applauds Disaster Relief for Damaged Fruit Crops—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today encouraged Northern Michigan farmers whose crops were affected by the spring freezes to utilize the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) disaster relief assistance. First District farmers can visit www.benishek.house.gov/fruitdamage for more information.

“I am pleased Secretary Vilsack and the USDA have recognized the critical need to help the many Northern Michigan farmers who were impacted by this weather related disaster. I am hopeful that with the help of these low-interest federal loans, our farmers will be able to persevere through this challenging growing season and keep their businesses open,” said Dr. Benishek, a doctor from Iron River.

Following hard late frosts across much of Northern Michigan that significantly damaged fruit crops, Dr. Benishek, along with other members of the Michigan Congressional delegation, sent a letter to Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack requesting the USDA grant low-interest emergency loans from the Farm Service Agency to help farmers. Recently, Michigan Governor Rick Snyder signed legislation that allocates up to \$300 million in low-interest loans for affected framers. To apply for assistance, farmers are encouraged to contact their local USDA Farm Service Agency office. Farmers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of the disaster declaration (February 2013) to apply for emergency loan assistance. If farmers are having difficulty obtaining financial assistance from this weather related disaster, they may also contact Dr. Benishek’s Gaylord office at 989-448-8811.

“I encourage all farmers who were impacted by the freeze to contact their local Farm Service Agency office or contact my office for any questions or assistance they need,” added Dr. Benishek. Of the 72 counties requesting disaster designation, 26 counties in Michigan’s First District are eligible to receive aid – Alcona, Alger, Alpena, Antrim, Arenac, Bay, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Chippewa, Crawford, Delta, Dickinson, Emmet, Gladwin, Iosco, Iron, Luce, Mackinac, Marquette, Menominee, Montmorency, Ogemaw, Oscoda, Otsego, Presque Isle and Schoolcraft.

The funding for this relief was previously allocated and does not represent any new federal spending.

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For Immediate Release:
17 July 2012

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Dr. Benishek Authors Bill To Allow Veterans To Receive Surplus Property —Bill Removes Federal Requirements To Give Veterans Groups Greater Access—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today introduced the “Surplus Property for Veterans Act” (H.R. 6114), a bill to provide qualified Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) greater access to federal surplus property, such as military vehicles and equipment, for use at their facilities.

“From a refrigerator for use at a local post to a vehicle for a Memorial Day parade, access to surplus property will help our veterans’ organizations better serve their members. These items have already been purchased by the federal government, so why not give our veterans’ organizations a chance to utilize them instead of letting them sit unused? This is a common sense measure,” said Dr. Benishek, a doctor who worked in the Iron Mountain VA Medical Center for 20 years.

Under current law, veterans’ organizations must meet certain requirements to be eligible for surplus property. They must demonstrate that they are a qualified non-profit organization and are acquiring the property for educational or public health purposes. These requirements greatly limit the number of VSOs that are eligible for surplus property. The “Surplus Property for Veterans Act” will simply amend current law to remove these restrictions and make it easier for local VSOs to acquire surplus property.

“I see this legislation as a simple fix to a simple problem. In these tough economic times our veterans’ organizations are trying to stretch their bucks a little further, and being able to receive surplus property will make that easier. I am confident that this small but important legislative fix will give the men and women who have served our country greater access to the items they deserve,” added Dr. Benishek.

The “Surplus Property for Veterans Act” has been referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

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For Immediate Release:
19 July 2012

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Dr. Benishek Supports Measure to End American Involvement In Afghanistan —Northern Michigan Lawmaker Seeks End to Decade-Long War—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today voted to support an amendment to the “Department of Defense Appropriations Act for FY 2013” (H.R. 5856) that would effectively end American military involvement in Afghanistan.

“This measure reflects my belief that there is no longer a military solution in the ongoing war in Afghanistan. I want to see the White House and Congress work together to responsibly bring this war to an expeditious end. I believe a majority of Northern Michigan’s citizens have grown tired of this decade-long conflict and want our troops to come home,” said Benishek, a doctor from Iron River whose daughter served in the Afghan conflict.

The amendment, offered by Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA-09), would defund American military operations in Afghanistan, but leave enough funding available to responsibly and safely bring American service members home from the conflict.

“I have been skeptical of this war for some time, but I have never doubted the skill and resolve of the American military. Our brave men and women in uniform have done everything our national leaders have asked them to do, and more. I strongly support the work of our armed forces, and I am confident that when this war finally does end, our soldiers will come home to a grateful nation,” added Benishek, a member of the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

Dr. Benishek visited Afghanistan as part of a Congressional Delegation for Members of Congress with a medical background on October 6, 2011. The purpose of the trip was to learn more about healthcare services provided to armed service members from military bases in Afghanistan.

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For Immediate Release:
20 July 2012

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Dr. Benishek Praises Progress In Improving Grand Marais Harbor —Construction Bids Released on Federal Pier Maintenance Project—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today praised the decision by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to begin the bidding process for the Grand Marais Harbor federal pier maintenance project in Grand Marais.

“Having lived in Upper Michigan all my life, I know that boating and harbors play a critical role in Northern Michigan’s economy. The renewed effort of the federal pier project is encouraging news for boating on Lake Superior and for the Grand Marais community. I’m pleased to have been part of the process and I am hoping this project will move forward quickly,” said Benishek, a doctor from Iron River and lifelong resident of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula.

The Grand Marais project is an attempt to repair the federal pier at the site and restore the harbor’s “harbor of refuge” status. Once completed, the harbor will be able to protect boats from fast moving storms on Lake Superior as well as increase the recreational potential of the Grand Marais community. According to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the project has now been approved and the solicitation for construction bids was released on July 17. These bids are scheduled to be opened July 26, with an award date of August 10 and a deadline for construction to begin by August 20.

“Like many in Northern Michigan, I have been frustrated by the bureaucratic slowdowns that have stalled this project for a long time. For the past year, my office has advocated for the timely construction of this project and we are very pleased to see the bid process beginning. My goal is to continue to remain as helpful as possible as the pier construction project begins to progress,” added Benishek.

The federal pier project is separate from Burt Township’s breakwater replacement project. The Township’s project is funded by the State of Michigan and construction is currently underway.

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For Immediate Release:
24 July 2012

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Dr. Benishek Joins Bipartisan Effort To Help Farmers —Northern Michigan Lawmaker Encourages House Action on ‘Farm Bill’—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) joined a bipartisan group of 75 Members of Congress who signed a letter addressed to the leadership of the U.S. House of Representatives encouraging action on the “Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act of 2012” (H.R. 6083), also known as the Farm Bill, before the House adjourns for its August recess.

The Farm Bill is federal legislation that establishes the general direction of America’s agriculture, nutrition, conservation, and forestry policies. Farm Bills are typically enacted every five to seven years. Michigan farmers rely on the Farm Bill for crop insurance, risk management tools for growers, and conservation programs.

“From cherry orchards to dairy farms, agriculture plays a critical role in Northern Michigan’s economy. Our farmers and the many industries they support expect action from Congress now. For the sake of farmers in Northern Michigan and across this nation, I am hopeful House leadership will take action and move this bill forward in a timely manner,” said Dr. Benishek, a doctor from Iron River.

Dr. Benishek voiced his support for Michigan farmers in a signed a letter to House Speaker John Boehner (R-OH), Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-VA), Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer (D-MD). The letter stresses that while the bill is not perfect, it is critical that House leadership provide adequate floor time for the Farm Bill to be debated, passed and ultimately signed into law by President Obama before Congress recesses for the month of August.

The letter reads in part: “We all share the goal of giving small businesses certainty in these challenging economic times. Agriculture supports nearly 16 million jobs nationwide and over 45 million people are helped each year by the nutrition programs in the Farm Bill. We have a tremendous opportunity to set the course of farm and nutrition policy for another five years while continuing to maintain and support these jobs nationwide.”

H.R. 6083 passed the House Committee on Agriculture Committee by a bipartisan vote of 35 to 11 on July 12. The current “Farm Bill” is slated to expire on September 30, 2012.

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For Immediate Release:
25 July 2012

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Dr. Benishek: “Tax Hikes Will Be Bad News For Northern Michigan Businesses”
—Economic Study Indicates President’s Plan Will Cause Over 700,000 Job Losses—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today again called for a full extension of current tax rates after a recent economic study from Ernst & Young suggested that over 700,000 jobs will be lost nationwide if President Barack Obama’s plan to increase tax rates on small business owners is enacted.

“Keeping taxes low for our job-providers is essential to help Northern Michigan’s economy grow. This report illustrates what will happen if President Obama’s job-killing tax plan is enacted and our small businesses are hit with a massive tax hike next year. I have visited business owners all over the First District and they are telling me that President Obama’s higher taxes will hurt their companies and force them to lay off employees,” said Benishek, a doctor from Iron River and lifelong resident of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula.

The recent report from Ernst & Young, analyzing the long term economic impact of President Obama’s plan to raise taxes on job providers, suggests that up to 710,000 jobs will be lost nationwide if the plan is adopted. The report indicates that Michigan will lose as many as 21,300 jobs and reduce overall economic output in the state by \$5.2 billion.

“The President has said he thinks the private sector is ‘doing fine,’ but it’s not, and it will get even worse if he raise taxes on our small businesses. As a doctor who ran a small business, I strongly support extending all of the current tax rates to provide some economic certainty to our job creators and allow them to keep more of their own money,” added Benishek.

Unless action is taken by the President and Congress, the current tax rates put in place in 2001 and 2003 will expire on January 1, 2013.

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For Immediate Release:
27 July 2012

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Dr. Benishek Supports National Effort to “Stop the Tax Hike”

—Representative Discusses Tax Reform and Jobs In Roundtable Discussion—

MARQUETTE, MI: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today hosted a roundtable meeting with local business leaders at the Marquette City Hall as part a national effort by House Republicans known as “Stop the Tax Hike” day to discuss tax reform and ways federal policy can improve job growth.

“I’ve spent the last several months visiting Northern Michigan businesses. This has been a great way to learn how federal policy can help them grow and, frankly, hire more workers. I hear time and again that Congress needs to focus on providing a stable tax environment for our small businesses and Michigan’s families. This means a tax code that everyone can count on, that is simpler to understand, and doesn’t go up from year to year,” said Dr. Benishek, a doctor who ran his own medical practice in Iron Mountain for 28 years.

Dr. Benishek hosted today’s meeting in Marquette as a way to learn more about the specific challenges local business owners face with the economic uncertainty coming from Washington and President Barack Obama’s proposal to raise tax rates imposed on job creators. A recent Ernst & Young study warned that President Obama’s tax plan will result in as many as 710,000 job losses in the United States, and 21,300 jobs losses in the State of Michigan.

“If President Obama’s tax plan goes into effect, I fear Northern Michiganders will lose their jobs. Our families and businesses simply cannot afford this kind of tax hike. I want to see tax reform that makes our federal tax code flatter and simpler for everyone. I am committed to providing this type of tax reform to Northern Michiganders,” added Dr. Benishek.

Just this week, Dr. Benishek joined over 30 other freshman Members of Congress who signed a letter addressed to the leadership of the U.S. House of Representatives encouraging comprehensive federal tax reform to provide economic certainty to families and businesses.

“Job creation in Northern Michigan remains my number one priority. Like many in our area, I’m concerned that unless we grow the economy, our children and grandchildren will not have the same shot at the American Dream that we had. My goal is to support policies that will fix our broken tax code and allow our small businesses to grow and hire more employees,” said Dr. Benishek.

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For Immediate Release:
1 August 2012

Contact:
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Dr. Benishek Supports Effort to Prevent Tax Increases on Northern Michigan Families —Statement of Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01)—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today released the following statement after voting in support of the “Job Protection and Recession Prevention Act of 2012” (H.R. 8), a bill that will extend all current federal tax rates and prevent massive tax increases on American families and businesses:

“Northern Michigan’s working families and small business owners cannot afford a massive tax increase next year. In this difficult economy, folks in Northern Michigan are finding it tough to pay their bills and provide for their families. The last thing they need is an extra tax bill of over \$2,000 per year.

I have lived in my Northern Michigan my whole life. I know that families throughout the District are struggling to plan their budgets when they don’t know what their tax bill will be next year. Even worse, Michigan families are faced with the fact they may lose their jobs if these tax increases are enacted.

These tax hikes will be just as bad for our small businesses. As a doctor who ran my own small business, I know raising taxes on our job creators will limit economic growth, hinder investment, and lead to fewer jobs for those in Northern Michigan. It is time we provide some real economic certainty to our job providers and allow them to grow and hire more employees.

Economic experts have warned these devastating tax hikes will destroy as many as 710,000 jobs nationwide, including 21,000 jobs right here in Michigan. We cannot allow this to happen. Now that the House has taken action to prevent these tax hikes from hurting our nation’s economy, I am hopeful the Senate and the President will recognize the need to act and extend all current tax rates for the sake of America’s families and small businesses.”

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For Immediate Release:
1 August 2012

Contact:
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Dr. Benishek To Vote “Yes” On Bill To Fix Broken Federal Tax Code —Legislation Will Provide Pathway To Pro-Growth Tax Reform—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today announced his support for the “Pathway to Job Creation through a Simpler, Fairer Tax Code Act” (H.R. 6169), a bill that will require Congress to consider comprehensive tax reform to boost economic growth by providing a simpler, fairer tax code.

“Retooling America’s broken tax code will provide a better environment for private sector job growth. Right now, the tax code is too complicated and is filled with loopholes and giveaways that favor some sectors over others. That needs to be fixed. I believe Northern Michigan’s families and businesses will benefit from a simpler, fairer tax code that is easier to understand and encourages job creation,” said Dr. Benishek, a doctor who practiced in Iron Mountain for 28 years.

The “Pathway to Job Creation through a Simpler, Fairer Tax Code Act” would require the House and Senate to consider legislation containing the following principles for tax reform, included in the last two House-passed budgets: (1) consolidation of the current individual income tax brackets into two brackets and a top rate of not more than 25 percent; (2) reduction of the corporate tax rate from 35 percent to not more than 25 percent; (3) repeal of the Alternative Minimum Tax; (4) broadening of the tax base to maintain revenue between 18 and 19 percent of the economy; and (5) change to a “territorial” system of taxation, which will prevent American businesses from unfairly having to pay additional taxes on business they do overseas.

By streamlining tax laws and allowing job providers to keep more of their own money, businesses will have the opportunity to invest more in expansion and create jobs. Additionally, tax reform will allow American families to better plan for the future by making a simpler and fairer tax code.

“This legislation paves the way for tax reform that will promote investment and innovation and allow American companies to be more competitive in the global market. Instead of stifling economic growth with complicated and unfair tax laws, I believe Congress needs to enact some common sense reforms that will create jobs and make it easier for Michigan families and businesses to plan their own budgets,” added Dr. Benishek.

The U.S. House of Representatives is scheduled to vote on the “Pathway to Job Creation through a Simpler, Fairer Tax Code Act” on August 2, 2012.

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For Immediate Release:
6 August 2012

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Dr. Benishek Authors Bill To Ensure Veterans Receive Their Benefits Faster —New Legislation Will Expedite VA Claims For Those With Hearing Loss—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today introduced the “Reducing Barriers to Veterans’ Benefits Act” (H.R. 6297), a bill to speed up the veterans’ disability claims process for veterans with hearing loss.

“This initiative will allow many of Northern Michigan’s veterans to receive their benefits faster. Our veterans fought for our freedoms overseas and they shouldn’t have to fight government red tape to receive their benefits when they return home,” said Dr. Benishek, a doctor who worked at the Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center in Iron Mountain for 20 years.

The “Reducing Barriers to Veterans’ Benefits Act” will expedite the process for VA claims related to tinnitus—or hearing loss. Veterans who served in a military occupation that was prone to causing hearing loss and have been identified by a medical doctor as having hearing loss will immediately be eligible to receive VA benefits. With this change, veterans will no longer have to go through the lengthy process of gathering evidence and submitting their information to the Veterans Administration for review. With one-third of all VA claims related to hearing loss, this initiative will ease the overall claims backlog.

“Hearing loss is one of the most common conditions for our veterans, so fast-tracking those cases will help ease the VA disability claims backlog. I’ve been speaking with veterans all over Northern Michigan and they agree this measure will be positive step toward improving the disability claims process,” added Dr. Benishek, Michigan’s sole member of the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

Currently, 66 percent of VA disability compensation claims are more than 125 days old and deemed “backlogged.” In the Detroit Regional VA Office, which processes disability claims for Michigan veterans, the average time required to complete a claim is 15 to 18 months.

“After working in a VA hospital for 20 years, I know the frustration of dealing with the VA bureaucracy and I’m committed to ensuring our veterans receive the benefits they deserve as soon as possible,” said Dr. Benishek.

Michigan’s First District is home to more than 68,000 veterans, which accounts for 13.7 percent of the District’s population.

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For Immediate Release:
7 August 2012

Contact:
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Dr. Benishek Supports Bill To End ‘Solyndra’ Type Government Waste —Legislation Will Prevent Federal Giveaways That Put Taxpayers at Risk—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today endorsed the “No More Solyndras Act” (**H.R.6213**), a bill which will protect American taxpayers by terminating the Obama Administration’s loan guarantee program that was used to give taxpayer dollars to failed companies like Solyndra.

“The Obama Administration made a risky gamble with millions of taxpayer dollars on Solyndra and lost that bet,” said Dr. Benishek, a surgeon from Iron River. “I believe Northern Michigan’s citizens deserve to have their precious tax dollars used wisely, not given over to failed companies,” Dr. Benishek continued.

This legislation phases out the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) loan guarantee program by prohibiting the department from issuing any loan guarantees for applications submitted after December 31, 2011. The bill also contains additional protections to taxpayers by prohibiting the DOE from making any loan guarantees until the Secretary of Treasury has made a recommendation on the merits of the guarantee. Additionally, this bill requires the DOE to provide a detailed explanation to Congress if a loan guarantee does not confirm to a recommendation made by the Treasury Department.

“This Administration should be focused on creating jobs, not handing out over \$500 million in taxpayer dollars to an unproven solar company that ended up going belly-up. These are the kind of antics that make Americans so angry at Washington. We need to put an end to this type of waste, and this bill makes clear—there will be no more Solyndras,” added Dr. Benishek. In March of 2009, the Department of Energy awarded Solyndra, a California-based solar company, \$535 million in loan guarantees without receiving outside reviews of the quality of the company. In September 2011, Solyndra filed for bankruptcy and laid off more than 1,000 workers.

The “No More Solyndras Act” was authored by Rep. Fred Upton (MI-06) and has been referred to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce.

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For Immediate Release:
8 August 2012

Contact:
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Dr. Benishek Hosts Series of Live Conference Calls With Northern Michiganders —Northern Michigan Doctor Listens To Constituent Concerns On District-Wide Calls—

PETOSKEY, MI: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today hosted a series of live telephone town hall meetings with thousands of First District citizens to answer questions and discuss issues of interest in Northern Michigan. The toll-free conference calls allowed citizens throughout Michigan's First Congressional District to participate in a live question and answer session with their elected representative in Congress.

"As always, it was refreshing to hear the questions and comments from Northern Michigan's citizens. Frankly, a lot of folks I talk with are expressing their concerns about the weak economy, the massive federal debt, and the President's new health care law. Those of us who live and work in Northern Michigan want this economy to improve so families can better plan for the future and for seniors can look forward to a quality retirement. I remain committed to supporting policies that do just that," said Dr. Benishek, a doctor from Iron River who ran his own medical practice in Iron Mountain for 28 years.

Dr. Benishek was joined on the calls by Representative Tom Price (GA-06) and Representative Mike Rogers (MI-08). Dr. Price, a Michigan native and graduate of the University of Michigan, is an orthopedic surgeon from Roswell, Georgia. He sits on the House Committee on Ways and Means, the House Budget Committee and is Chairman of the House Republican Policy Committee. Rep. Rogers, who was a commissioned officer in the U.S. Army and an FBI special agent, is the Chairman of the House Committee on Intelligence and also sits on the House Committee on Energy and Commerce.

Dr. Benishek, Dr. Price and Rep. Rogers fielded a wide array of questions during the calls regarding challenges facing the economy, jobs in Northern Michigan, taxes, veterans' issues, Medicare, and the impact of the President's health care law on Northern Michigan's families, small businesses, and local hospitals.

"As a doctor, I've treated seniors for nearly 30 years, so it was a great opportunity to speak with folks around the District and get their thoughts on the important issues we face. I was pleased to be joined on the calls by my colleagues, Dr. Price and Rep. Rogers. We heard some great questions and I believe we were able to provide some insight into the topics that are of interest to Michiganders," added Dr. Benishek.

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For Immediate Release:
16 August 2012

Contact:
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Dr. Benishek Praises 2012 Upper Peninsula Veteran of the Year

—Statement of Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01)—

ESCANABA, MI: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today released the following statement after attending the award ceremony for Corporal Richard M. Morrison, a Northern Michigan resident who was named the “2012 Upper Peninsula Veteran of the Year” by the U.P. Veterans’ Committee:

“Today, I was deeply honored to take part in the award ceremony for Corporal Richard Morrison, who was recognized as the 2012 Upper Peninsula Veteran of the Year. Corporal Morrison served in the Fighting 4th Division of the U.S. Marine Corps. He bravely served our nation in the Battle of Iwo Jima, and was awarded two Bronze Stars, the World War II Victory Medal and Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal.

Corporal Morrison’s selfless efforts for this nation did not end after he left active duty in the U.S. Marine Corps. He has continued to serve our country as a mentor to our veterans. He has dedicated his life to serving our veterans and their families in communities throughout Northern Michigan.

Corporal Morrison’s defense of our freedoms serves as an inspiration for all of us who call Northern Michigan home. He and his family should be deservedly proud of this award. He has undoubtedly earned it. On behalf of the citizens of Michigan’s First District, we thank Corporal Morrison for his service, sacrifice, and continued patriotism in service to our citizens.”

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For Immediate Release:
17 August 2012

Contact:
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Dr. Benishek Listens To Concerns of Northern Michigan Seniors —Northern Michigan Doctor Discusses Issues at Escanaba Senior Center—

ESCANABA, MI: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today spoke with First District seniors at the Escanaba Senior Center to answer questions and discuss issues of interest in Northern Michigan.

“Like many people in Northern Michigan, the folks I spoke with today are concerned about the direction in which our nation is heading. They are worried about the slow economy, the massive federal debt we are handing our children, and the effects of the President’s new health care law on Medicare. Our seniors want Congress to ensure that our children will have a bright future and be able to continue living and working in communities like Escanaba,” said Dr. Benishek, a doctor from Iron River.

Dr. Benishek visited the senior center to learn more about the issues that Northern Michigan senior citizens want Congress to focus on. Dr. Benishek gave a short update on what he is working on in Congress and then answered questions on topics such as Social Security, veterans’ issues, Medicare, and the new health care law.

“Many of Northern Michigan’s seniors are concerned because the President cut over \$700 billion from Medicare to pay for his new health care law. Experts predict that Medicare will be bankrupt in the next decade. We need to preserve and strengthen this program, not cut it like the President did. As a doctor who treated Medicare patients for nearly 30 years, I am committed to preserving and protecting this important program,” added Dr. Benishek.

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For Immediate Release:
22 August 2012

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Dr. Benishek Supports Bill to Protect the Great Lakes

—New Legislation Aimed at Preventing the Spread of Asian Carp—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today announced his support for the “Asian Carp Prevention Act of 2012” (H.R. 6348), a bill designed to help prevent Asian carp from entering the Great Lakes.

“The Great Lakes are one of Michigan’s greatest resources, and we must ensure that they are protected from invasive species like the Asian carp. Frankly, I am deeply concerned by the threat these fish pose to the ecosystem of the Great Lakes, our native fish species, and our state’s economy. I want to do everything I can to protect our lakes,” said Dr. Benishek, a general surgeon from Iron River and a member of the House Committee on Natural Resources.

The “Asian Carp Prevention Act of 2012,” authored by Rep. Mike Rogers (MI-08), directs the Secretary of the Army to coordinate and spearhead efforts to prevent the spread of Asian carp into the Great Lakes by taking such actions as installing new barriers, improving locks in the Great Lakes region, and blocking the spread of the carp at the Brandon Road Lock in Illinois.

“Growing up in Iron River and being an avid sportsman, I know the Great Lakes are the lifeblood of Northern Michigan’s economy. We’ve already seen the devastating effects of invasive species like sea lamprey, and we can’t risk allowing Asian carp to enter our waterways. By stopping the spread of Asian carp, we can ensure that our children and grandchildren enjoy the blessings and beauty of the Great Lakes for decades to come,” added Dr. Benishek.

Since coming to Congress, Dr. Benishek has supported several bipartisan measures that will fight against invasive species. Dr. Benishek is also a member of the Great Lakes Task Force, a bipartisan group of lawmakers aimed at protecting and defending the Great Lakes, as well as promoting the economic impact the Lakes provide to the region. Over the past three decades, the Task Force has worked on issues such as lake restoration initiatives, environmental clean-up projects, and invasive species control efforts.

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For Immediate Release:
23 August 2012

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Dr. Benishek Visits Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary

—Representative Discusses Great Lakes Shipwreck Preservation In Alpena—

ALPENA, MI: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today visited the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary in Alpena to learn more about the sanctuary's efforts to preserve more than 50 shipwrecks located in Lake Huron.

"Today's visit to Thunder Bay Marine Sanctuary was an excellent opportunity to learn more about their work to protect some of Northern Michigan's famous shipwrecks and keep the stories of these lost vessels alive. The shipwrecks of the Great Lakes are a key part of Michigan's rich maritime history. The First District is very fortunate to be home to this sanctuary," said Dr. Benishek, a general surgeon from Iron River.

Dr. Benishek held a discussion with Thunder Bay Sanctuary officials to learn more about their technical training programs with Alpena Community College (ACC) and Alpena High School. In coordination with the sanctuary, ACC's marine technology program offers students the opportunity to conduct marine research for universities to prepare them for careers on the ocean or the Great Lakes. During the visit, Dr. Benishek also had the opportunity to briefly observe some of Thunder Bay's shipwrecks on board a glass bottom vessel, the *Lady Michigan*.

"I am really impressed with the work the folks at the Thunder Bay Sanctuary and ACC are doing to help our young people get an education and achieve their dreams. The preservation efforts being done at Thunder Bay are great for the Alpena community and all of Northern Michigan," added Dr. Benishek.

Designated by Congress in 2000, the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary covers 448 square miles of Lake Huron and protects more than 50 identified shipwrecks within its boundaries. The sanctuary is managed jointly by the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the State of Michigan.

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For Immediate Release:
30 August 2012

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Dr. Benishek: “Help Available For Northern Michigan’s Farmers”

—Federal Disaster Assistance Offered to Farmers Impacted by Drought Conditions—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has authorized federal disaster assistance to aid farmers affected by the drought conditions throughout the State of Michigan.

“The USDA’s recent announcement is welcome news for many of Northern Michigan’s farmers. I want to thank Governor Snyder and Secretary Vilsack for their leadership on this issue. With drought conditions impacting farms across our state, I am hopeful this disaster assistance will help farmers make it through this difficult drought and stay in business. My office is here to help our farmers and their families obtain the disaster relief they need,” said Dr. Benishek, a general surgeon and Iron River native.

Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced on August 29, 2012 that all 83 counties in Michigan would be given primary disaster designation, thus making Michigan farmers eligible for disaster assistance through the Farm Service Agency (FSA). The assistance is in the form of low interest federal loans.

To apply for assistance, farmers are encouraged to contact their local USDA Farm Service Agency office. Farmers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of the disaster declaration (April 2013) to apply for emergency loan assistance. If farmers are having difficulty obtaining financial assistance from the USDA they may also contact Dr. Benishek’s Gaylord office at 989-448-8811.

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For Immediate Release:
12 September 2012

Contact:
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Dr. Benishek's Office Accepting Applications for Service Academies Until October 26 —Eligible Northern Michigan Students Can Apply to U.S. Service Academies—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) is currently accepting applications from residents of Michigan's First Congressional District interested in a nomination to the U.S. Military, Naval, Air Force, and Merchant Marine Academies. The deadline for applications is Friday, October 26, 2012.

"Our region is home to many high caliber men and women who will make excellent candidates for our nation's Service academies. I am pleased that these young people will have the opportunity to serve our country while gaining a first-class tuition-free education. Making nominations to the academies is a privilege that I take very seriously and I am honored to be part of this exciting process," said Dr. Benishek, a general surgeon, member of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs and lifelong resident of Northern Michigan.

To qualify for nomination, applicants must:

1. Be a citizen of the United States
2. Be a legal resident of Michigan's First Congressional District
3. Have earned a strong academic record
4. Be 17-years-old, but not yet past one's 23rd birthday (on July 1st of the year one enters a military academy)
5. Be medically qualified
6. Score near or above the published averages on a candidate fitness assessment

Applicants will be required to fill out an application, submit academic transcripts, standardized test scores (ACT or SAT), three letters of recommendation, a resume and a short essay explaining why they want to attend a Service Academy. Additional application information and a downloadable application packet can be found at Dr. Benishek's official website, www.benishek.house.gov/servicenominations.

Applicants who are selected for entry to one of the Service academies will be notified no later than April 2013.

Nominations to the US Coast Guard Academy (USGA) are not made through Congressional offices as the USCGA accepts candidates based on their own testing criteria. Those interested in applying to the USCGA can learn more at their website: www.cga.edu.

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For Immediate Release:
13 September 2012

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Dr. Benishek: “NFL Should Listen To Its Fans in Northern Michigan”

—Representative Presses NFL To Air Packers VS Bears Game On Local Television—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today released the following statement after the National Football League (NFL) declined requests to air the Thursday Night Football game between the Green Bay Packers and the Chicago Bears on cable television across Northern Michigan:

“I am deeply disappointed that the NFL has decided not to allow tonight’s game between the Packers and Bears to be broadcast on a local TV station in our area. Yesterday, I spoke one-on-one with NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell and conveyed to him the concerns of my constituents. I expressed to the Commissioner just how important it is to Northern Michigan’s citizens and businesses to have this game on local TV tonight. Times are tough in Northern Michigan right now and a lot of families can’t afford to purchase extra cable packages to watch a Packers game. While the League decided not to accept our request for tonight’s game, I will continue working with the NFL and our local cable companies to provide fans in Northern Michigan with access to these games.”

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The Packers and Bears game is scheduled to air only on the NFL’s own cable television network and will not be available to individuals in Northern Michigan unless they have purchased a subscription to the NFL Network. Based on the information provided from the NFL to Dr. Benishek’s office today, in previous seasons games were broadcast on a local broadcast network in Green Bay which had a relay station in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. This evening’s game is being broadcast in Green Bay on NBC-26 which does not have a relay station in the UP. In order to air the game in the UP, the NFL or the NFL Network would have to grant permission to a separate station in the UP, which the NFL claims raises irreconcilable legal issues and sets a precedent that the League could have to adopt nationwide.

For Immediate Release:
18 September 2012

Contact:
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Dr. Benishek: “County Road 595 Will Create Jobs in Northern Michigan”

—Statement of Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01)—

MARQUETTE, MI: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today released the following statement after the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) requested the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) remove its objections to the construction of County Road 595 in Marquette County:

“Today’s development is welcome news for Marquette County and all of Northern Michigan. I enthusiastically support this project because it will create jobs in our region. Unemployment in the Upper Peninsula is well above the national average so any new job opportunities will be helpful for Michigan families who are struggling to pay their bills and plan for their future. I am pleased that after working closely for months with the MDEQ, EPA, and state and local officials, it appears this project is one step closer to moving forward. Now that the MDEQ has acted, I hope that the EPA will continue working with the state to advance this critical project in an expeditious manner.”

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For Immediate Release:
26 September 2012

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Dr. Benishek Highlight Veterans' Suicide Prevention Month

—Northern Michigan Lawmaker Praises National Effort To Help Veterans At-Risk—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today praised the U.S. Veterans' Administration (VA) for designating September as Veterans' Suicide Prevention Month.

"Our veterans face enormous challenges when they return home after fighting for our freedom. Sadly, suicide among veterans is a significant problem. I am pleased the VA has used this month to raise awareness for our brave men and women who are suffering from mental illness," said Dr. Benishek, a general surgeon who worked at the Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center in Iron Mountain for 20 years.

The Veterans Administration designated September as Veterans' Suicide Prevention Month as a way to raise awareness across the country of the many veterans at-risk of committing suicide. According to the VA, the administration is partnering with the Department of Defense, community organizations, Veterans Service Organizations, and health care providers to encourage people to recognize veterans at-risk for suicide and assist them in getting the help they need.

"Preventing veteran suicide is not limited to a single month. Families, friends and neighbors of veterans in Northern Michigan should always be vigilant in recognizing suicide risk," added Dr. Benishek, Michigan's sole member of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Individuals can encourage veterans who are at risk of suicide to call the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255.

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For Immediate Release:
24 September 2012

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Dr. Benishek Authors Measure to Limit Job-Killing Federal Regulations —Amendment Will Evaluate Health Effects from Costly New Washington Rules—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) authored an amendment to the “Stop the War on Coal Act of 2012” (H.R. 3409) that will require the Obama Administration’s regulators to evaluate the health effects associated with regulatory costs on job-providers. The amendment was adopted without opposition by the U.S. House of Representatives on September 20, 2012. The “Stop the War on Coal Act of 2012” has been sent to the U.S. Senate for its consideration.

“As a doctor who ran my own medical practice for nearly 30 years, I want to ensure President Obama’s regulators take a close look at the damaging effects new federal rules can have on Michigan’s job providers and citizens. I want Washington bureaucrats to learn that when their job-killing regulations put people out of work they hurt Northern Michigan families and breadwinners,” said Dr. Benishek, a general surgeon and Iron River native.

The “Stop the War on Coal Act of 2012” forms a committee to study the cumulative cost of federal regulations. Dr. Benishek’s amendment requires this committee to examine the health impacts on citizens that are associated with regulatory costs. The amendment will require federal agencies to do a more thorough cost-benefit analysis when writing new rules and regulations.

Economic experts report that small businesses currently face annual regulatory costs that add up to \$10,000 per employee. These regulatory costs often force businesses to lay off workers and prevent them from hiring new employees. A 2011 study by Stony Brook University found that the risk of premature death was 63 percent higher for people who experienced extended periods of unemployment.

According to the Institute for Energy Research, Michigan may lose six electric power plants due to new federal regulations. Dr. Harvey Brenner of the University of North Texas has found that a large scale closure of power plants and the subsequent job losses could cause between 170,000 and 300,000 premature deaths nationwide.

“I’ve been travelling all over Northern Michigan meeting with business owners who are telling me that federal regulations are making it hard for them to hire new employees. Our job providers should not be forced to lay off more workers because Washington regulators are imposing costly new rules. We need to get Washington out of the way and get this economy moving again,” added Dr. Benishek.

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For Immediate Release:
27 September 2012

Contact:
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Dr. Benishek Praises World War II Veterans at Honor Flight Welcome Home Ceremony

— Statement of Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) —

ESCANABA, MI: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today released the following statement after greeting World War II veterans from Northern Michigan in Escanaba after the veterans travelled to Washington, DC to visit the World War II Memorial as part of the Honor Flight Network:

“I was deeply honored to speak with World War II veterans from Northern Michigan in Escanaba this evening after they arrived home from visiting the World War II Memorial in Washington. From Omaha Beach to Iwo Jima, these brave men left their families to fight for our freedom and to rid the world of tyranny.

Like many in Northern Michigan, I am saddened that America is losing so many heroes from the ‘Greatest Generation’ each and every day. The organizers and volunteers of the Honor Flight Network also deserve our praise for working so hard to ensure these veterans have a chance to see the national memorial that honors their remarkable achievements.

Northern Michigan’s many World War II veterans risked their own lives so that others in the world had a chance at freedom. They answered the call when their country needed them the most, and our nation remains forever in their debt.”

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For Immediate Release:
27 September 2012

Contact:
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Dr. Benishek: “President’s Health Care Law Puts Delta County Seniors At Risk”
—Alarming New Report Shows Delta County To Face \$99.4 Million in Medicare Cuts—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today renewed his call to repeal President Obama’s “Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act” (PPACA) after a newly released report identified that the President’s new health care law will cut Medicare payments in Delta County by a frightening \$99.4 million over the next ten years.

“Frankly, these devastating Medicare cuts will cause pain for Delta County’s seniors. As a doctor, I’m deeply disappointed that President Obama has chosen to pay for his new health care law by cutting nearly \$100 million from Medicare payments in Delta County. Our seniors have paid into Medicare their entire lives and deserve to receive the benefits they have earned. Instead, the President is going putting Delta area seniors at risk by cutting millions from Medicare to fund his new health care law,” said Dr. Benishek, a general surgeon from Iron River.

The new report, released by the University of Minnesota’s Medical Industry Leadership Institute (MILI), details the local impact of the \$716 billion in reductions to Medicare made by the President’s health care law. According to the study, the impact of these Medicare cuts on Delta County will total \$99.4 million over the next ten years. Additionally, the report indicates Michigan’s First Congressional District will face nearly \$2 billion in cuts over the next decade. Under the President’s law, \$415 billion in cuts will be made to Medicare payments to hospitals, hospice care, dialysis centers, and nursing homes.

“These Medicare cuts could put many of our local hospitals out of business and force seniors to have to travel long distances just to get medical treatment. I don’t want to see that happen. Rural hospitals depend on Medicare payments and the President’s Medicare cuts will make it more difficult for them to stay open,” said Dr. Benishek.

According to Richard Foster, Chief Actuary of Medicare and Medicaid Services, the President’s health care law will eventually cause numerous hospitals in the United States to become unprofitable.

“I want to save Medicare and prevent it from going bankrupt. That’s why I have supported a bipartisan plan that will save Medicare for retirees today, our children, and future generations. This plan will make NO changes for anyone 55 or over and will offer younger workers the option to stay in traditional Medicare or take advantage of a set of government-approved plans,” added Dr. Benishek.

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For Immediate Release:
2 October 2012

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Dr. Benishek Supports Bill To Protect Northern Michigan Jobs

—Legislation Will End No-Bid Contract Status For Federal Prison Industries—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today announced his support for H.R. 3634, a bill that will eliminate the no bid contract status of Federal Prison Industries, also known as UNICOR. This government-owned corporation uses federal prison labor and receives no-bid government contracts to make goods and provide services. UNICOR's no bid or "mandatory sourcing" status denies local small businesses in Northern Michigan the opportunity to compete for the same contract.

"Sadly, UNICOR is costing hardworking people in Northern Michigan their jobs. Just recently, a company in Elk Rapids was impacted by UNICOR and it cost that area over 100 jobs. These types of job losses are devastating to Northern Michigan families and our local communities. With unemployment in Michigan at 9.4% and over 8% nationally, why is the federal government favoring prisoners over taxpaying citizens who haven't been convicted of a crime?" said Dr. Benishek, a general surgeon and Iron River native.

H.R. 3634, authored by Rep. Bill Huizenga (MI-02), requires UNICOR to submit a detailed analysis of the impact it will have on private sector employers before it enters a new product market.

"I am committed to ensuring jobs stay in Northern Michigan and are not lost to unfair business practices imposed by the federal government. I want to thank Congressman Huizenga for his leadership on this bipartisan effort to level the playing field and promote small business job creation in Michigan. His common sense legislation will end UNICOR's no bid contracts and force it to fairly compete with hard working businesses in Northern Michigan and across the country," added Dr. Benishek.

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For Immediate Release:
3 October 2012

Contact:
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Dr. Benishek: “Costly Federal Regulations Kill Job Growth In Northern Michigan”
—Northern Michigan Lawmaker Discusses Effects of Federal Rules in Dickinson County—

SAGOLA, MI: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today met with Northern Michigan farmers at Johnson Potato Farm in Sagola to discuss the negative impact of costly federal regulations on farms and small businesses.

"Federal bureaucrats in Washington are imposing costly regulations that hurt our farmers and small business owners in Northern Michigan. I've been meeting with job providers all over the First District and they are telling me that the cost to comply with new federal rules is preventing them from hiring new employees. We need jobs in Northern Michigan. Washington needs to get out of the way so small businesses can start hiring," said Dr. Benishek, a general surgeon from Iron River.

During the meeting at Johnson Potato Farm, local farmers discussed how the cost of complying with new regulations coming from Washington, DC, is hurting their businesses and making it more expensive for them to operate. According to the Small Business Administration (SBA), small businesses in the United States currently face annual regulatory compliance costs of over \$10,000 per employee. Additionally, the SBA reports that small business nationwide face total regulatory costs of \$1.75 trillion annually. That is enough money for businesses to provide 35 million private sector jobs with an average salary of \$50,000 per year.

"Families in Northern Michigan are struggling to make ends meet right now and a lot of our small businesses are wondering if they will be able to stay open another year. The last thing we need is for Washington regulators to impose new rules and take money out of the pockets of hard working people in Northern Michigan. I support polices that will ease burdensome federal regulations, create jobs and bring some common sense to Washington," added Dr. Benishek.

Since coming to Congress, Dr. Benishek has supported numerous pieces of legislation that will ease costly regulations on local farmers and small business owners, such as the "Preserving America's Family Farms Act," a bill that will stop a new federal rule that would have banned farmers' own children from doing many everyday chores and jobs on family farms.

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For Immediate Release:
4 October 2012

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Dr. Benishek Discusses Protecting Northern Michigan Jobs in Elk Rapids

—Northern Michigan Lawmaker Visits Traverse Bay Manufacturing in Antrim County—

ELK RAPIDS, MI: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today visited Traverse Bay Manufacturing in Elk Rapids to learn more about the business and to discuss the negative impacts that Federal Prison Industries, also known as UNICOR, has on local job creation.

“It was great to visit Traverse Bay Manufacturing again today and meet with the hard working employees of this successful Northern Michigan business. Regrettably, this local job provider has been negatively impacted by UNICOR and faces the prospects of serious job losses. I want to protect jobs in Elk Rapids and across Northern Michigan from suffering due to unfair practices imposed by the federal government,” said Dr. Benishek, a surgeon from Iron River.

Federal Prison Industries, also known as UNICOR, is a government-owned corporation that uses federal prison labor and receives no-bid government contracts to manufacture goods and provide services. UNICOR’s no bid or "mandatory sourcing" status denies local small businesses in Northern Michigan the opportunity to compete for the same contract.

“We need to end UNICOR’s unfair advantage that is costing jobs in Northern Michigan. It makes no sense for the federal government to favor federal prisoners over hard working Michigan employees who have not been convicted of a crime. That’s why I’ve supported bipartisan legislation that will end UNICOR’s no bid contract status and allow our job providers like Traverse Bay Manufacturing to fairly compete,” added Dr. Benishek.

Dr. Benishek has endorsed H.R. 3634, authored by Rep. Bill Huizenga (MI-02), which will eliminate UNICOR’s no bid contract status and require UNICOR to submit a detailed analysis of the impact it will have on private sector employers before it enters a new product market.

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For Immediate Release:
9 October 2012

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Dr. Benishek Fights To Protect Paper Mill Jobs In Northern Michigan

—Lawmaker Presses Federal Government To Review Possible Trade Violations In Canada—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) recently sent a letter to United States Trade Representative (USTR) Ron Kirk requesting his office conduct full review of a financial package that was recently offered by the government of Nova Scotia to a paper mill that directly competes with mills in Northern Michigan.

“I’m fighting to protect Northern Michigan’s paper mills and the many jobs the facilities support. Northern Michigan citizens go to work each day at these mills and they deserve to have other countries play by the rules. We are simply asking the USTR to take a thorough look at this situation and make sure no violations of have taken place,” said Dr. Benishek, a general surgeon from the Upper Peninsula.

Dr. Benishek’s letter to the USTR was in response to a recent financial package offered by Nova Scotia to Pacific West Commercial Corporation, the buyers of a paper mill in Port Hawkesbury, Nova Scotia. This financial rescue package from the government may not be consistent with Canada’s current international trade obligations under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). Knowing any possible violations could be placing paper mills in Northern Michigan at unfair competitive disadvantage, Dr. Benishek has requested the USTR to fully review the situation and to take swift action should any violations be discovered.

The letter sent to the USTR reads in part: “As you know, the Port Hawkesbury mill competes both directly and indirectly with American paper mills, including several in Northern Michigan. Improper government assistance to the Port Hawkesbury mill, which reportedly has the capacity to produce as much as 400,000 tons of supercalendered paper each year, could seriously disadvantage paper mills that produce comparable paper, such as those in Manistiquet, Escanaba, and Quinnesec, Michigan.”

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For Immediate Release:
11 October 2012

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Dr. Benishek: “Education Key To Job Growth In Northern Michigan”

—Roundtable Meeting Puts Spotlight On Preparing Students For Future Jobs—

MARQUETTE, MI: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today hosted a roundtable meeting with local business leaders and educators to discuss the importance of preparing students for 21st Century jobs.

“Giving our students a quality education is a vitally important to prepare them for the jobs of tomorrow. I know we have a lot of great teachers in Northern Michigan who are making sure students have the skills they need to enter the workforce. Today’s meeting highlighted the work already being done in our area and also explored some great ideas to prepare Michigan’s young people for the future,” said Dr. Benishek, a surgeon from Iron River and lifelong resident of the Upper Peninsula.

The roundtable meeting, which was held at Northern Michigan University’s University Center, was an informative discussion on STEM (Science, Tech, Engineering, Math) education. The roundtable discussion provided an opportunity for area educators to share best practices of how to teach STEM concepts. The conversation also centered on ways educators and job providers can work together to better prepare students for 21st Century jobs in Northern Michigan and around the world.

“I’ve been travelling all over Northern Michigan and speaking with job providers to hear what they have to say. I’m often told of the important need to find employees that have the right skills and education for the jobs that are already available. That’s exactly why it’s so critical our students receive a top-notch education, especially in the areas of science, math and engineering,” added Dr. Benishek, who sits on the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology.

Participants in the discussion included representatives from Northern Michigan businesses, the Superintendent of Cheboygan, Otsego and Presque Isle Public School Districts, the Superintendent of L’Anse Public Schools, and the Principal of Menominee Catholic Central School.

“Frankly, my family didn’t have much when I was growing up in Northern Michigan, but I was able to get a great education and become a doctor. I want our children and grandchildren to have that same shot at the American Dream. It all starts with a quality education,” said Dr. Benishek.

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For Immediate Release:
19 October 2012

Contact:
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Dr. Benishek Hosts Veterans Public Meeting With Committee Chairman Jeff Miller —Lawmakers Discuss Ways To Improve Services For Northern Michigan Veterans—

ELK RAPIDS, MI: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) and U.S. Congressman Jeff Miller (FL-01), Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, today held a special veterans' public meeting in Elk Rapids.

"It was great to meet with so many of Northern Michigan's veterans today. Chairman Miller and I were pleased to learn more about their views on how we can improve the VA system and ensure our nation's heroes get timely access to the benefits they have earned. Our veterans have fought for our freedoms and I am committed to fighting for them," said Dr. Benishek, a surgeon who worked at the Oscar G. Johnson VA Hospital in Iron Mountain for 20 years.

"I want to thank my good friend, and fellow Veterans' Affairs Committee Member, Dr. Dan Benishek, for hosting today's town hall with the veterans in Northern Michigan," stated Rep. Jeff Miller, Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. "Veterans, especially those in rural areas, do not always have the ability to get care on demand from the VA. So it is important that we continue to look for ways to broaden access to the VA for those living in our communities across the nation, and especially in Michigan, by bringing care and services to them."

The special veterans' public meeting, which was held at the AmVets Center in Elk Rapids, was aimed at providing local veterans with insight into the work and focus of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. At the meeting, veterans received an update from Dr. Benishek, Chairman Miller, and State of Michigan VA officials and then had the opportunity to take part in a question and answer session.

Other participants in the discussion included: David Leonard, Director of the Department of Veterans Affairs Detroit Regional Office, Major General Mike Lehnert, Vice-Chair for the Student Veterans of America, Jason Allen, Michigan's Senior Deputy Director for Veterans Affairs, and Tom Brown, Senior Vice Commander of AmVets Post 114.

"During today's meeting, we heard from veterans concerned about the disability claims backlog problem. Right now, many of our veterans have to wait over a year just to start receiving their benefits. We need to fix that. That's why I launched a plan last spring that will ease this backlog and get Northern Michigan's veterans their benefits faster. Over the summer, I was proud to introduce common sense legislation that will help address the backlog by speeding up the claims process for veterans with hearing loss," added Dr. Benishek, who is Michigan's only member of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

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For Immediate Release:
5 November 2012

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Dr. Benishek Leads Effort For Job Creation In Northern Michigan —Congressman Presses For Swift Action On Road Project in Marquette County—

MARQUETTE, MI: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) recently led a joint effort in Congress to promote Northern Michigan jobs by sending a letter urging the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to take action and allow for the construction of County Road 595 in Marquette County.

“Families and small businesses in Northern Michigan are hurting right now. Good paying jobs are hard to come by. The unemployment rate in Northern Michigan is well above the national average, yet bureaucrats in Washington are preventing the creation of new jobs in our region. I’m urging the EPA to remove its objections to the road as soon as possible and allow this job-creating project to move forward in a timely manner,” said Dr. Benishek, a surgeon from Iron River.

County Road 595 in Marquette County is a proposed new 21.4 mile primary road, running north-south between U.S. 41 and County Road Triple A. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has requested the EPA remove their objections. The road project has been extensively analyzed by the DEQ, the EPA, and the Marquette County Road Commission and the proposed route has been modified to avoid local wetlands and significantly reduce any environmental impacts. Dr. Benishek was joined by U.S. Representatives Bill Huizenga (MI-02), Dave Camp (MI-04), Fred Upton (MI-06), Tim Walberg (MI-07), Mike Rogers, (MI-08), and Candice Miller (MI-10) in writing to the EPA to request they lift their objections to the road project and allow the county to move forward with construction.

“We can’t let good paying jobs be blocked by federal red tape and bureaucratic roadblocks. Our citizens are struggling and they need jobs now. I’m pleased to be taking a lead in this effort and I thank my colleagues in the House for their leadership on this critical issue,” added Dr. Benishek, who has been arguing in support of the road project since coming to Congress in 2011.

The letter sent to the EPA reads in part: “As elected representatives of the State of Michigan, we are fervently committed to preserving our state’s pure air and clean water. Notwithstanding our commitment to a pure Michigan, we believe this is one instance where legitimate environmental concerns can be fully addressed even as we take steps to bring new jobs to our state. We stress that all relevant stakeholders in Michigan have articulated their support for this project and have requested that it move forward. The USEPA alone is blocking the commencement of this important project.”

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For Immediate Release:
11 November 2012

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Dr. Benishek Honors Northern Michigan's Veterans — Statement of Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) —

CRYSTAL FALLS, MI: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today released the following statement honoring Northern Michigan's military veterans on Veterans Day:

"Today, we honor our veterans in Northern Michigan and throughout this great country. Veterans Day is marked not to celebrate the wars America has fought, but rather to honor the brave men and women who have fought in them.

Throughout America's history, ordinary men and women have stepped forward and served the cause of freedom. Their bravery and selflessness is as old as our republic. Our veterans have brought us from subjects to citizens and defeated evil dictators around the globe. Today, our soldiers still fight in distant lands to keep this country safe and bring a better life to people they have never even met.

There is no praise or tribute that can adequately match the efforts our veterans have made to defend our liberty. But on behalf of Michigan's First Congressional District, I want to extend a sincere thank you to all of Northern Michigan's veterans and their families for their service and sacrifice to our nation."

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
26 November 2012

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Dr. Benishek: “Now Is The Time For Real Tax Reform”

—Lawmaker Stresses Need For Pro-Growth Reforms to The U.S. Tax Code—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today again declared his strong support for comprehensive tax reform to boost economic growth by providing a simpler, fairer tax code.

“The time for campaigning has ended and the time for enacting pro-growth tax reform is now. Congress and the Administration have a real opportunity to work together to find solutions for the American people. Retooling America’s broken tax code will provide a better environment for real job growth in Northern Michigan. Right now, the tax code is too complicated and is filled with loopholes and giveaways that favor some sectors over others. That needs to be fixed,” said Dr. Benishek, an Iron River native and general surgeon.

Dr. Benishek has consistently called for comprehensive tax reform that will improve the economy and help address America’s staggering national debt. By streamlining tax laws and allowing job providers to keep more of their own money, businesses will have the opportunity to invest more in expansion and create jobs. Additionally, tax reform will allow American families to better plan for the future by making a simpler and fairer tax code that is easier to understand.

“President Obama has made it clear that his plan is to raise taxes on families and businesses. That’s the wrong approach. Economic experts have warned the President’s devastating tax hikes will destroy as many as 710,000 jobs nationwide, including 21,000 jobs right here in Michigan. Northern Michigan families cannot afford higher taxes or the fiscal cliff. I encourage the President to work with the Congress in a true bipartisan fashion to achieve tax reform for the sake of America’s families and small businesses,” added Dr. Benishek.

On August 2, 2011, Dr. Benishek voted in support of the “Pathway to Job Creation through a Simpler, Fairer Tax Code Act” (H.R. 6169), a bill that requires Congress to consider comprehensive tax reform. The legislation has not been acted on by the U.S. Senate.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
27 November 2012

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Dr. Benishek: “Power Plant Deal Is Great News For Northern Michigan”

—Statement of Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01)—

MARQUETTE, MI: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today released the following statement after Wolverine Power and WE Energies announced a deal to keep the Marquette Presque Isle Power Plant operational:

“Wolverine and WE’s announcement today is great news for the Marquette region and all of Northern Michigan. Reliable and secure power in the Upper Peninsula is critical for job creation, growing our local economy, and the livelihood of Northern Michigan’s citizens. I am pleased that after working closely with Governor Snyder’s office, Michigan Senator Tom Casperson, and local officials, it appears this power plant will continue providing energy to the Upper Peninsula. Additionally, the investments made by Wolverine will improve this facility while creating jobs locally. My office will continue to be as helpful as possible as this deal moves forward to ensure our area continues to have a strong and successful power plant.”

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
30 November 2012

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Dr. Benishek Supports Effort To Increase American Innovation And Competiveness —Legislation Aimed At Allowing Highly Skilled Graduates To Stay in United States—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today voted in support of the “STEM Jobs Act” (H.R. 6429), a bill designed to boost job creation and spur economic growth by making it easier for foreign graduates with advanced degrees to contribute to the United States economy. “It’s important we keep our best and brightest graduates living and working here in America. This bill does just that. In the global economy of the 21st Century, it is critical that our nation has access to the world’s best talent,” said Dr. Benishek, a general surgeon and Iron River native.

The “STEM Jobs Act” will eliminate the diversity visa lottery and reallocate up to 55,000 green cards a year to the top foreign graduates of American universities with advanced degrees in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields. Currently, foreign graduates in STEM fields are in demand by employers, but many of them end up on green card waiting lists and instead go to work for one of America’s global competitors. The “STEM Jobs Act” will make the nation’s immigration system smarter by reallocating these visas to those who make valuable contributions to the United States economy.

“Northern Michigan is home to several universities which are educating students from around the world in fields of science and technology. These top-notch graduates have the potential to develop new innovations or launch the businesses of the futures,” added Dr. Benishek.

Since coming to Congress, Dr. Benishek has been a strong supporter of STEM education and preparing students with the skills for the jobs of the future. On December 10, Dr. Benishek will host his second STEM Education Roundtable at Michigan Technological University (MTU) to discuss education and jobs with educational professionals and key Northern Michigan job providers.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
5 December 2012

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Dr. Benishek: “EPA’s Decision Step Forward For County Road 595”

—Statement of Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01)—

MARQUETTE, MI: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today released the following statement following the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) decision to withdraw one of its objections to the Country Road 595 Project in Marquette County:

“The EPA’s decision is a small step forward in the process of getting County Road 595 constructed. I have been fighting hard for this project because it has the potential to create many good-paying jobs in the Upper Peninsula. We can’t let new jobs in Northern Michigan be blocked by federal red tape and bureaucratic roadblocks. I am looking forward to continue working with federal, state, and local stakeholders to try to get this job-creating project to keep on moving in a positive direction.”

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
6 December 2012

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Dr. Benishek Named To House Committee on Agriculture

—First District Lawmaker Committed To Fighting For Northern Michigan Farmers—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today was named as a new member of the House Committee on Agriculture for the 113th Congress.

“I am deeply honored to be selected as a new member of the House Committee on Agriculture. As a lifelong resident of Northern Michigan, I know just how important agriculture and farming is to our region. Over the past two years, I’ve had the privilege of visiting farms and meeting farmers all over the First District and learning more about their issues. I am committed to being a voice for Northern Michigan’s farmers in Congress,” said Dr. Benishek, a general surgeon from Iron River.

“I am pleased that Congressman Benishek will be joining the House Agriculture Committee in the next Congress. The work of our committee affects every American and I look forward to working with Dan on these important issues,” said Rep. Frank Lucas (OK-03), Chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture.

The House Committee on Agriculture was created on May 3, 1820, and has jurisdiction in the House of Representatives over all agricultural issues. According to the Michigan Farm Bureau, the agriculture sector contributes over \$71 billion to state’s the economy. Michigan is home to over 56,000 farms covering over 10 million acres.

Additionally, the Committee has jurisdiction over forestry issues and the U.S. Forest Service, which is critical to Michigan’s First District as it contains three national forests which total some 2.3 million acres of woodlands. Dr. Benishek has been a leader in Congress on forestry issues and has passed legislation to create jobs in Northern Michigan by ensuring more timber is responsibly harvested in federal forests.

“Whether it was assisting farmers with the fruit crop freeze in Lower Michigan or discussing the impact of federal regulations with farmers in the U.P., I am proud to have been fighting for Northern Michigan’s farmers while in Congress. I am looking forward to working with Chairman Lucas and my colleagues on the Committee in the 113th Congress to craft policies that will help our local farmers, loggers, and improve the economy in Northern Michigan,” added Dr. Benishek.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
7 December 2012

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Dr. Benishek Comments on November 2012 Unemployment Report

—Statement of Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01)—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today released the following statement after the U.S. Department of Labor's September jobs report indicated that national unemployment is now 7.7% percent:

"Today's jobs report is another reminder that Washington must focus on job growth. Times are tough in Northern Michigan right now and many families are struggling to provide for their children and save for the future. Millions of Americans are still out of work and 350,000 gave up hope and left the job hunt last month. Despite these facts, President Obama is focused on raising taxes and spending more money our nation doesn't have. These job-killing tax increases are not a fix for our nation's fiscal problems and will only generate enough revenue to fund the government for 8 days. President Obama needs to work with Congress in a bipartisan fashion and accept the compromise plan offered by House Leadership this week that will begin to address our debt crisis and provide real job growth in this country."

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
10 December 2012

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Dr. Benishek: “Great Education Means More Jobs For Northern Michigan”
—Congressman Hosts Roundtable Meeting in Houghton To Highlight Vocational Education—

HOUGHTON, MI: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today hosted a roundtable meeting with business leaders and educators at Michigan Technological University (MTU) to discuss the importance of preparing students for the jobs of the future.

“Education is key for job growth in Northern Michigan. It’s essential we give our students a quality education so that they are prepared to pursue the jobs of the 21st Century. I was privileged to host today’s meeting at Michigan Tech and will develop an action plan to help our local teachers and universities promote science, math and engineering education,” said Dr. Benishek, a surgeon from Iron River and lifelong resident of the Upper Peninsula.

Dr. Benishek’s roundtable meeting was an informative discussion on the importance of STEM (Science, Tech, Engineering, Math) education. The STEM roundtable meeting provided an opportunity for area educators to share best practices of how to teach STEM concepts. The conversation also centered on ways educators and job providers can work together to better prepare students for 21st Century jobs in Northern Michigan and around the world.

“I have visited hundreds of small businesses across Northern Michigan and many job providers have told me about their need to find employees who have the skills and training for the jobs available. Having the right training offers job-seekers the real chance to find a good-paying position in our region. Frankly, great education means more jobs in Northern Michigan,” added Dr. Benishek, who served on the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology during the 112th Congress.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
12 December 2012

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Dr. Benishek: “Health Care Law’s Taxes Will Hurt Northern Michigan”
—Congressman Fights To Prevent New Taxes From Hitting Medical Device Manufacturers—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today expressed concern about tax increases in President Obama’s new health care law that will directly impact medical device manufacturers in Northern Michigan.

“As a doctor who treated patients for the last 30 years, I know this impending tax increase will hurt Northern Michigan. This tax hike will hurt patients and small businesses. There are medical device businesses in Michigan’s First District that employ hundreds of people. These job providers should not be punished to pay for President Obama’s new health care law,” said Dr. Benishek, a general surgeon who practiced medicine for the last 28 years in Iron Mountain.

Recently, the United States Internal Revenue Service (IRS) published an outline of medical supplies and technologies that will be subject to a 2.3 percent tax that is scheduled to be imposed on the sale of medical devices on January 1, 2013. As a result of this tax, it is expected that medical device manufacturers will pass on the cost of this tax increase to their buyers and thus increase the costs of health care.

“Our economy is not doing well right now and good-paying jobs in Northern Michigan are hard to find. It makes absolutely no sense to raise taxes on job providers who make medical equipment. Additionally, these tax increases will be passed along to the consumer and make health care even more expensive for Northern Michigan families. We need solutions that lower the cost of health care, not increase it while putting local jobs at risk,” added Dr. Benishek.

In June 2012, Dr. Benishek voted in support of the bipartisan “Protect Medical Innovation Act of 2011” (H.R. 436), a bill that would eliminate this new \$29 billion excise tax on medical devices. The legislation passed the House of Representatives, but has not been considered by the U.S. Senate.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
13 December 2012

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**Dr. Benishek: “Mr. President: Let’s Reduce Wasteful Spending, Instead of Raising Taxes”
—Congressman Stresses Need to Reduce Spending To Address America’s Fiscal Crisis—**

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today reiterated his strong support for significantly reducing federal spending to diminish the national debt and address the nation’s looming fiscal crisis.

“America’s staggering deficits are hurting job creation in Northern Michigan and steering our country toward bankruptcy. Our federal government doesn’t have a tax problem, it has a spending problem. We are not going to address the nation’s long-term fiscal challenges until we reduce this wasteful spending,” said Dr. Benishek, a general surgeon from Iron River.

Recently, House Leadership offered a compromise plan to avert the so called “fiscal cliff” that will save the federal government \$2 trillion by reducing spending and reforming the federal tax code. This plan contains \$1.2 trillion in spending cuts and raises federal revenue by \$800 billion by enacting real tax reform that will eliminate loopholes and special giveaways. Shortly after the compromise was sent to the White House, the Obama Administration rejected this offer.

“Frankly, President Obama has not been serious about reducing spending and is refusing to compromise. Instead, he has been fixated on raising taxes. But his tax increases will only fund the government for 8 days. That’s not a plan to address our debt crisis. The President claimed when he was elected that he would ‘cut the deficit in half’ in his first term. That hasn’t happened. Instead, we have added more than \$4.9 trillion to the national debt with items like his stimulus bill. We just can’t keep spending money we don’t have,” observed Dr. Benishek.

The federal government’s debt has grown by almost 50 percent since 2009. The national debt was \$10.6 trillion in January 2009, and currently stands at \$16.3 trillion—an increase of \$5.7 trillion.

“This type of massive debt is putting America’s future at risk. We can’t keep mortgaging our children’s future. I urge the President to come to the negotiation table with a real plan to reduce our borrowing and wasteful spending. We need to work together to reduce these deficits and get this economy moving again,” added Dr. Benishek.

#

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
18 December 2012

Contact:
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Dr. Benishek Presses Federal Regulators To Act On County Road 595

—Lawmaker Continues Fighting For Job-Creating Project in Marquette County—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today again pressed regulators at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to release their objections to the County Road 595 project in Marquette County.

“Today, I had a meaningful phone conversation with officials from the EPA and reiterated my support for getting the County Road 595 project moving as soon as possible. Frankly, this issue is about jobs in Northern Michigan. Construction of this road has the potential to create many good-paying jobs in the Marquette area and throughout the Upper Peninsula and I plan to continue fighting for this project until the road is complete,” said Dr. Benishek, a general surgeon from Iron River.

County Road 595 in Marquette County is a proposed new 21.4 mile primary road, running north-south between U.S. 41 and County Road Triple A. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has requested the EPA remove their objections. The road project has been extensively analyzed by the DEQ, the EPA, and the Marquette County Road Commission and the proposed route has been modified to avoid local wetlands and significantly reduce any environmental impacts. Recently, the EPA announced it has removed one of its objections to the project, but maintain an additional objection that is preventing the road from moving forward.

“I’ve lived here in U.P. all my life, so I know how important it is to protect our environment. I want to see reasonable environmental protections, but we have to focus on creating the jobs in Northern Michigan we need. I intend to keep pressing the regulators in Washington to keep this process moving in the right direction. Jobs for Northern Michigan families are at stake,” added Dr. Benishek.

#

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
20 December 2012

Contact:
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Dr. Benishek Named As Chairman of House Veterans' Subcommittee on Health —VA Doctor To Lead Key Subcommittee During The 113th Congress—

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today was named as the new Subcommittee Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health for the 113th Congress.

"I am honored to be named as the new Subcommittee Chairman for the Subcommittee on Health. I've had the privilege of working with veterans all my life. First, as a VA doctor in Iron Mountain and now as Michigan's only member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee. Our veterans have fought for our freedoms and they deserve top-notch service when they return home," said Dr. Benishek, who worked at the Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center in Iron Mountain for two decades.

"As a physician, and as one who has worked for VA, I could not think of a better person than Dan to lead the Subcommittee on Health," stated Rep. Jeff Miller (FL-01), Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. "His dedication to ensuring the best care for our veterans is unmatched, and we are honored to have him lead the way on the Subcommittee this coming Congress."

The Subcommittee on Health has legislative, oversight, and investigative jurisdiction over the Veterans Health Administration including medical services, medical support and compliance, medical facilities, medical and prosthetic research, and major and minor construction.

"Since coming to Congress, I have been listening to our veterans in Northern Michigan and fighting to address issues like the VA disability claims backlog. I am looking forward to continuing to work with Chairman Jeff Miller and all my colleagues—both Democrats and Republicans—on the committee in the 113th Congress to enact meaningful legislation that will help our military veterans and their families," added Dr. Benishek.

There are more than 68,000 veterans living in Michigan's First Congressional District, which accounts for 13.7 percent of the District's population.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
21 December 2012

Contact:
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House of Representatives Passes Dr. Benishek's Bill To Name Munising Post Office —Legislation Will Name Upper Peninsula Post Office After Mrs. Elizabeth Kinnunen—

WASHINGTON, DC: Legislation (H.R. 3378) authored by Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) to name the post office building in Munising, Michigan after Mrs. Elizabeth L. Kinnunen was recently passed by the U.S. House of Representatives.

"Mrs. Kinnunen's family should be deservedly proud of her life and accomplishments. Like so many people in Northern Michigan, her life's story was one of fidelity to her family and to her country. It is wonderful to see this legislation be passed by the House and I hope to see it reach the president's desk as soon as possible," stated Dr. Benishek, a lifelong resident of the Upper Peninsula.

Ms. Kinnunen, born Elizabeth L. Paasto, immigrated from Finland in 1903 and married Oscar Kinnunen in 1909. Mr. and Mrs. Kinnunen operated a boarding house in Marquette, Michigan. There they provided warm beds to countless timber and mining workers in Marquette County. Oscar and Elizabeth had eleven children. Eventually, they moved to Munising, Michigan. Oscar worked for Munising Paper Company and Elizabeth worked as a local cook. Mrs. Kinnunen was a faithful member of the Messiah Lutheran Church in Munising.

"I am completely taken by it of course. I know if my mother was here today she would say: thank you, thank you, thank you. She would be the first person in disbelief of receiving this honor. She would say there are so many other mothers who have made and continue to make the same sacrifice that she has made, they should be recognized as she is being recognized," said Jerry Kinnunen, Mrs. Kinnunen's son.

Two of Kinnunen's sons, Eiso Kinnunen and Raymond Kinnunen, were both killed defending America's freedom. Eiso was killed in action during the Battle of the Bulge in 1945, one of the most critical and decisive campaigns of World War II, while Raymond was killed during the Korean War in 1952. These two tragic deaths led to Kinnunen earning the unfortunate distinction as a two-gold star mother. In addition, Kinnunen had another son, Reino Kinnunen, who served this country in West Germany. Elizabeth died on April 5, 1974, at the age of 81.

"As an upstanding citizen and devoted two gold-star mother, Mrs. Kinnunen undoubtedly earned this designation. Naming this post office will be a great way for the community of Munising to celebrate her life and accomplishments," added Dr. Benishek.

H.R. 3378 passed the U.S. House of Representatives by voice vote on December 20, 2012.

#

FIVE WAYS TO REPAIR WASHINGTON'S BROKEN BUDGET PROCESS

February 27, 2012

By Rep. Dan Benishek M.D. (MI-01)

The American people have watched the congressional budget process become increasingly dysfunctional in the last few years. Without having a guideline for America's spending priorities, Washington has spent too much, borrowed too much and wasted taxpayer dollars. The national debt currently stands at over \$15 trillion—larger than this country's entire economy and equal to over \$49,000 for every citizen in America.

Regardless of where one falls on the political spectrum, I believe we can all agree there will be no serious debate about this nation's spending priorities without a budget proposal. The failure of the U.S. Senate to pass a budget in over three years—or even *propose* a budget this year—prevents Congress from having the important debate of how the federal government should spend taxpayer dollars.

While inaction in Congress has brought the budget debate to a standstill, there are proposals being considered that would address this problem. I am not an expert on federal budgeting, but I believe these five commonsense initiatives would go a long way toward putting this nation in better standing:

1. **No Budget, No Pay.** The “No Budget, No Pay Act” (H.R. 3642) is a commonsense bill that would prevent lawmakers from getting paid if they do not pass a budget resolution for the fiscal year. Congress has a constitutional responsibility to outline how it will spend precious taxpayer dollars. This is the job the American people elect their representatives to do and if they cannot get the job done they should not get paid.
2. **No Budget, No More Borrowing.** Last year's debt-limit showdown underscores the need for the “Budget Before Borrowing Act” (H.R. 3778). If enacted, this bill would ensure the debt-limit cannot be raised unless Congress has adopted a budget resolution. If Congress wants to raise the debt limit, they will need to first establish a blueprint for national spending.
3. **Real Spending Caps.** The “Spending Control Act” (H.R. 3576) would establish limitations on federal spending. These limitations are in the form of spending caps on the various categories of government spending and on deficits. These caps will be enforced by an automatic 4% reduction for any government program growing faster than the inflation rate.
4. **Target Wasteful Spending.** Under the “Expedited Legislative Line-item Veto Act” (H.R. 3521), the executive branch will be given the opportunity to reexamine laws within 45 days

after enactment for potentially wasteful spending. This bill would require Congress to take an “up or down” vote within five days after the President proposes any changes to a piece of legislation.

5. **Balanced Budget Amendment.** I believe Northern Michiganders expect the federal government not to spend more money than it takes in. The easiest way to ensure this happens is the addition of a balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution. It has become evident that many Washington politicians have no restraint in spending America’s hard earned tax dollars. Based on this evidence, unless Congress is handcuffed by the supreme law of the land, there may be little hope we can bring this country’s fiscal house in order.

Republicans, Democrats, and independents all know this nation is on the brink of endless deficits. But this future does not have to come to pass. Congress can stop fighting and take action now to move this country toward a stronger fiscal foundation. I believe reducing federal spending and balancing the budget is not complicated, it just requires the determination and will to get it done.

A HARD FOUGHT BATTLE TO SAVE CHEBOYGAN MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

May 7, 2012

By Rep. Dan Benishek M.D. (MI-01)

The announcement that McLaren Health Care finalized an agreement with the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), which paved the way to restore emergency and surgical operations in Cheboygan County, was welcome news for the community.

As many Northern Michiganders know, rural hospitals like Cheboygan Memorial offer more than just a lifeline to health care, they are economic focal points for the region and a source of pride for our local communities. I know this fact as well as anyone. Prior to coming to Congress in 2010, I spent nearly 30 years treating patients at a rural hospital in the Upper Peninsula.

I also know that Cheboygan Memorial's bankruptcy was not the fault of its hardworking doctors, nurses and staff that provided patient care.

While it was no mystery that the hospital had struggled financially and tried unsuccessfully to find a solution, the slip into Chapter 11 bankruptcy came as a surprise to almost everyone outside the hospital's walls. The decision led to an alarming chain of events for Cheboygan Memorial, complicated by miscommunications between the hospital, local officials and federal agencies. The effort to reopen Cheboygan Memorial was not easy. The multiple parties involved and bureaucratic roadblocks continuously snagged the process and made basic communication difficult and was further complicated by the intricacies of bankruptcy law.

Since the beginning, my staff and I were involved in every step of this process. Clearly, this was not an easy situation to remedy— if it was simple it would have been prevented long ago.

Knowing how important the hospital is to Cheboygan's families, my office and I were in constant contact with local creditors, the Michigan Congressional Delegation, the Michigan Department of Community Health, officials from McLaren Health Care and officials from all levels of government.

While the process was a minefield of obstacles and each day brought more and more frustration, we kept at it. As the progress stalled, little was publicly being revealed as the case headed into court proceedings.

I met face to face with the stakeholders in Cheboygan. As someone who worked his entire adult life in a hospital, it was difficult to see so much frustration in the hearts and minds of so many Cheboygan residents. All the meetings I took part in focused on what needed to be done in order to restore the hospital's daily emergency and surgical operations.

During the negotiations it became apparent that the most significant obstacle was obtaining a new provider number from CMS, who was initially unwilling to compromise on the outstanding liabilities/overpayments. For the sake of the community something had to be done. While working with all stakeholders, my office and I often served as the messenger between CMS and McLaren Health Care to ensure the process continued to move forward.

Whether it was staying in contact with CMS to resolve the provider number issue or contacting the Department of Justice to request funds for the distribution of medical records from the hospital, my staff and I sought to be as helpful as possible during the hospital negotiations.

During the entire process we never gave up. Families in Cheboygan need their hospital. We continued to press the necessary parties, because I know firsthand how important access to health care is for any community. I am thankful for the help of so many and I remain committed to doing everything necessary to restore full access to care for the Cheboygan community.

NO EARMARKS: WHY FEDERAL FUNDING FOR THE OLYMPIC CENTER HAS CEASED **August 23, 2012**

By Rep. Dan Benishek M.D. (MI-01)

In response to the recent editorial regarding the US Olympic Training Center at Northern Michigan University (NMU), I want to take a moment and correct the record as to why federal funding for the program has ceased.

Like many in northern Michigan, I am saddened to see that speed-skating has been suspended at NMU's Olympic Center. I think NMU and all residents of the Marquette community should be proud of the athletic accomplishments as a result of this facility.

My goal is to always have an honest conversation with my constituents about where I stand on issues and the votes I have taken. While I believe the Olympic Center at NMU is a very worthwhile program, a ban on congressional earmarks and the massive federal debt has halted federal funding for this initiative.

While it is convenient that some "didn't see the scholarship as an earmark," the B.J. Stupak scholarship was a specialized grant for a specific congressional district and fits the House of Representative's new definition of an earmark.

The rules of the 112th Congress are clear: there are no earmarks. Period. These rules were agreed to by the Republican controlled House and the Democrat controlled Senate. President Obama even stated in his first State of the Union address that he would veto any legislation containing earmarks.

Both President Bush and President Obama recommended eliminating funding for the B.J. Stupak Scholarship in their federal budgets. In fact, President Obama referred to the scholarship as "not performing" and "duplicative" because it provides government assistance to those eligible for vast amounts of other educational financial aid.

The notion that I refused to fight for the training center is factually incorrect. When I learned early last year that this funding would be ending, I fought to help NMU's training center pursue raising money through other means. Given the local support for this program, I have been hopeful we can find a way to support these student athletes without using taxpayer funding. In fact, in March of 2011, I wrote to the U.S. Olympic Committee asking them if they would allow NMU to use the iconic Olympic ring logo for fundraising efforts by NMU and the Marquette area.

The situation with the Olympic Center is symptomatic of our federal government's serious financial problems. Over the past several decades, both political parties have been poor stewards of America's finances and today we have over \$16 trillion in debt. Right now, the federal government borrows \$.40 cents of every dollar it spends. That is unsustainable. Unless we make serious spending reductions now, our nation will continue down a path toward complete bankruptcy.

I know my stance on this issue is not the politically easy position. But that's not why I'm here. I believe a majority of northern Michigan's citizens chose me to be their voice in Congress in order to make the tough decisions to get this country back on track and give our kids a shot at the American Dream. That has been my goal since coming to office, and that will remain my focus.

HELPING MICHIGAN'S FARMERS September 21, 2012

By Rep. Dan Benishek M.D. (MI-01)

Those of us who are from Northern Michigan know how important farming and agriculture are to our state and region. During my first term in Congress, I've put countless hours on the road meeting with farmers and visiting with constituents. From meeting with a dairy farmer in the Upper Peninsula to a cherry farmer in Manistee—you can't do this job without getting out and talking to people.

I'm a doctor, not a farmer, so I have actively worked to learn more about the issues and concerns of Northern Michigan's farmers. Each time I visit with farmers in our region, I am amazed at what I learn—from how to operate a cherry harvester to learning about the difficulty our farmers face in obtaining qualified workers. I've had the opportunity to see firsthand that our farmers and their families are some of the hardest-working citizens in the country. Regardless of the setting, I am always eager to meet generations of Michigan families who are working together to provide food for the tables of their communities and families around the world.

You see, while many Americans may not know where the cherries on a sundae or apples used for juice are grown, I am concerned that the very livelihoods of our family farmers are at risk. After seeing Michigan farms devastated by early season frosts only to be followed by punishing summer drought, I understand that relief programs have to be designed so that the farming industry will not be decimated in times of natural disaster. Earlier this year, I began working closely with a bipartisan group of Members of Congress from Michigan and state officials to ensure that affected farmers would be provided the relief that they need to recover from these tough losses. I know that Northern Michigan's farmers need to be able to protect the crops that they grow if natural disasters strike. That is one of the reasons why I strongly support a long-term farm bill because it will give specialty crop farmers in the First District better opportunities to purchase crop insurance.

As Congress concludes its business this year, I remain committed to passing a farm bill to make it easier for our farmers to keep their businesses thriving and plan for the future. This legislation will give Northern Michigan farmers more control over risk management programs and allow them to choose what best suits their needs. Since legislation has already passed the Senate and the House Agriculture Committee, I hope that this bill will come before the Floor of the U.S. House for a vote as soon as possible.

While travelling in Northern Michigan, I've met with numerous dairy farmers and have learned more about how important they are to Michigan's economy. These dairy farmers have been telling me they have been experiencing a lot of volatility in the last few years. Feed prices are

on the rise but the price our farmers receive for their milk has not dramatically increased. These challenges, along with many others our farmers face, is why I believe need a full farm bill. Additionally, a full farm bill needs to continue providing initiatives such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). This program has helped Michigan producers affected by the drought implement practices that will improve soil health and productivity. These important initiatives help farmers grow their crops while protecting Michigan's rich natural resources. Having lived my entire life in Northern Michigan, I know just how blessed our area is and I want to see it kept that way.

I know Northern Michigan's farmers want nothing more than to be able to run a profitable business and provide for their families. That's the American Dream. In this tough economy, I believe it is vitally important for Congress to support our farmers and help ensure that their children can have a better future. For the last 19 months, I have worked tirelessly to be a voice for Michigan's farmers in Congress and will continue to do so. I am honored that the Michigan Farm Bureau has endorsed me, and I look forward to visiting with you this fall—in my office or your farm. Please know that my office stands ready to provide assistance, and my staff and I look forward to hearing from you. By listening to our farmers, I am confident we can make the changes needed to get this country back on track and help Michigan's farmers continue to deliver top-caliber products to markets throughout our great state and around the world.

THE TIME TO ADDRESS OUR NATION'S PROBLEMS IS NOW

December, 10 2012

By Rep. Dan Benishek M.D. (MI-01)

Many families in Northern Michigan are deeply concerned about our nation's future. They have good reason to be—we are facing a weak economy, record deficits and a federal government we can't afford. For the past two years, lawmakers and the Administration have endlessly debated and dissected our nation's fiscal crisis, only to kick the problems down the road for another day. Well, I believe that day has arrived. The time to finally start addressing our nation's fiscal problems is now.

As the negotiations between Capitol Hill and the White House continue, my position has remained the same. I believe we need to address this nation's fiscal challenges by making serious, significant spending reductions and enact tax reform that lowers tax rates while eliminating loopholes and special giveaways. This approach represents a real opportunity for compromise with President Obama and Congressional Democrats, while laying the groundwork to get this country back on track.

There is plenty of blame to go around for this fiscal crisis, but the fact is our federal government spends too much money. Both political parties have been guilty of being irresponsible with our precious taxpayer dollars. It has resulted in a staggering \$16 trillion in national debt and a federal government that is borrowing over \$.40 cents for every dollar it spends. We need to take a serious look at reducing all areas of the federal budget, including defense spending and eliminate wasteful spending like the President's new health care law and taxpayer giveaways to failed companies like Solyndra.

President Obama has stated that he wants to see a "balanced approach." In response, House Republicans have offered a reasonable compromise plan that will save \$2.2 trillion through tax reform in combination with real, significant spending cuts. This plan is by no means perfect, but is a solid foundation for long term debt reduction and contains the revenue increases the President has asked for.

The President wants other people to pay for his massive federal spending by raising taxes on wealthier Americans and many small business owners. The President's tax rate increases may fulfill his campaign promises, but they won't create jobs and will not even put a dent into our budget deficits either. The President's tax increases would only fund the government for a mere 8 days and it would take 381 years to pay off the national debt with the revenue generated. That's not a plan to fix our problems. Additionally, economic experts have warned these tax hikes will destroy as many as 710,000 jobs nationwide, including 21,000 jobs right here in Michigan.

The President has yet to offer any serious plans to reduce spending. Just recently, the President's opening bid in negotiations with House leadership was a demand for \$50 billion in new federal stimulus spending and for Congress to give Mr. Obama the authority to unilaterally raise the nation's borrowing limit. With a \$16 trillion dollar debt, President Obama is actually proposing *more* federal spending. That's not a "balanced approach"—that's the same policies that have lead to this fiscal crisis.

Ultimately, this debate is not about Democrats and Republicans. This debate is about what kind of future we will leave for our children and grandchildren. Addressing our nation's fiscal problems is not complicated; it just requires the leadership and the will to do it. In last month's election, the American people chose a divided government and with that comes the responsibility for both sides to work together. I am hopeful the President will recognize this and finally work with both parties to find the solutions the American people deserve.

VI. CONSTITUENT CORRESPONDENCE

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COMMUNICATIONS VOLUME BY COUNTY IN 2012

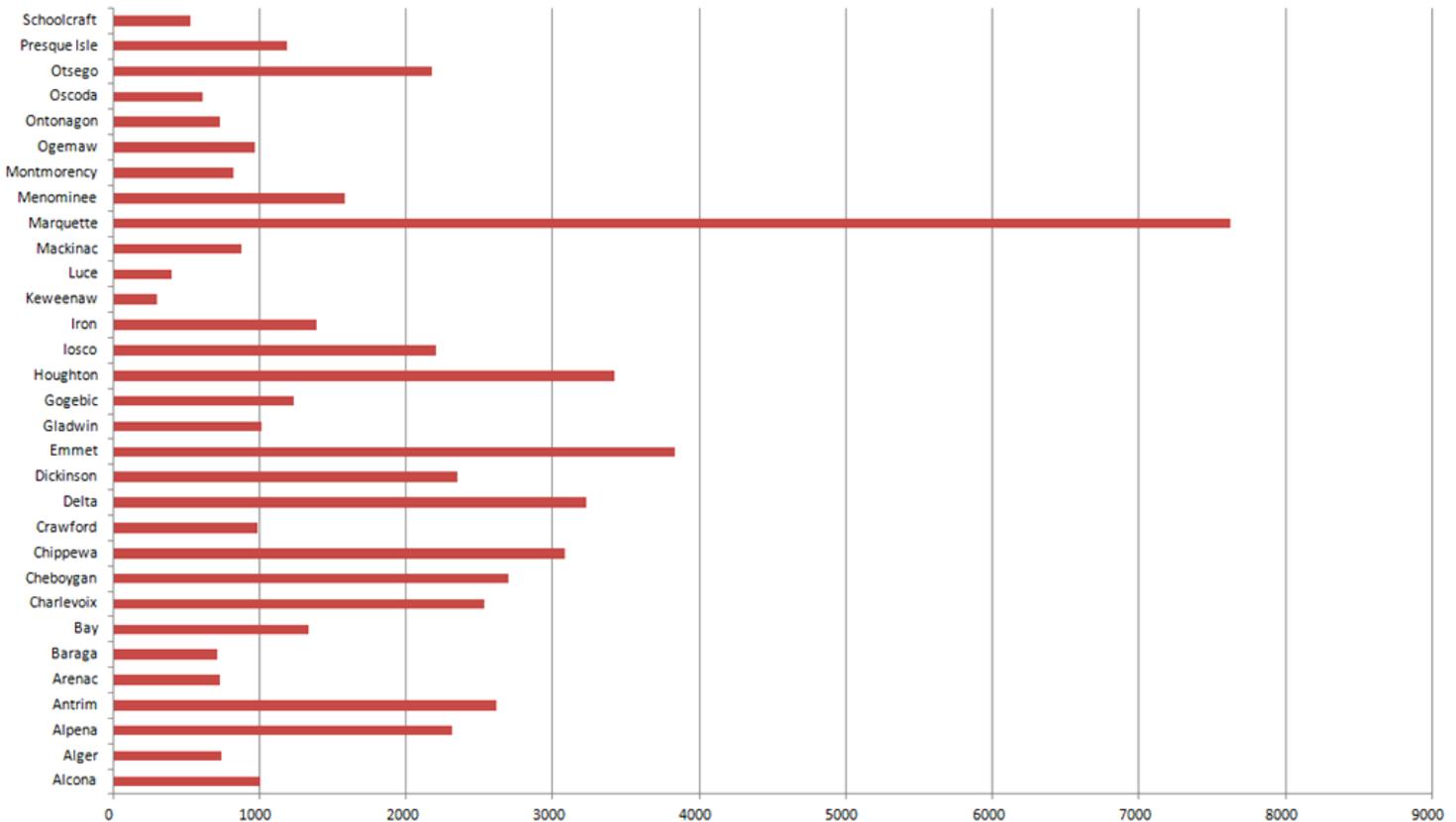
BACKGROUND

Between January 2012 and December 2012, the office of Dr. Dan Benishek received 55,238 pieces of constituent correspondence, including phone calls, letters, and emails. The average time for a constituent to receive a response was approximately 5 days.

Of the 31 counties in Michigan’s First District, Marquette County had the most mail (7,626 pieces), while Keweenaw County (the least populated county in Michigan) registered the fewest pieces of mail with 297. The average number of pieces of correspondence from each county was 1,782 pieces.

In terms of monthly mail, the following graph (Figure 1.) illustrates mail volume throughout the year, based on distribution from county:

Constituent Correspondence By County During 2012 (Figure 1.)



(Constituent Correspondence Per Thousands)

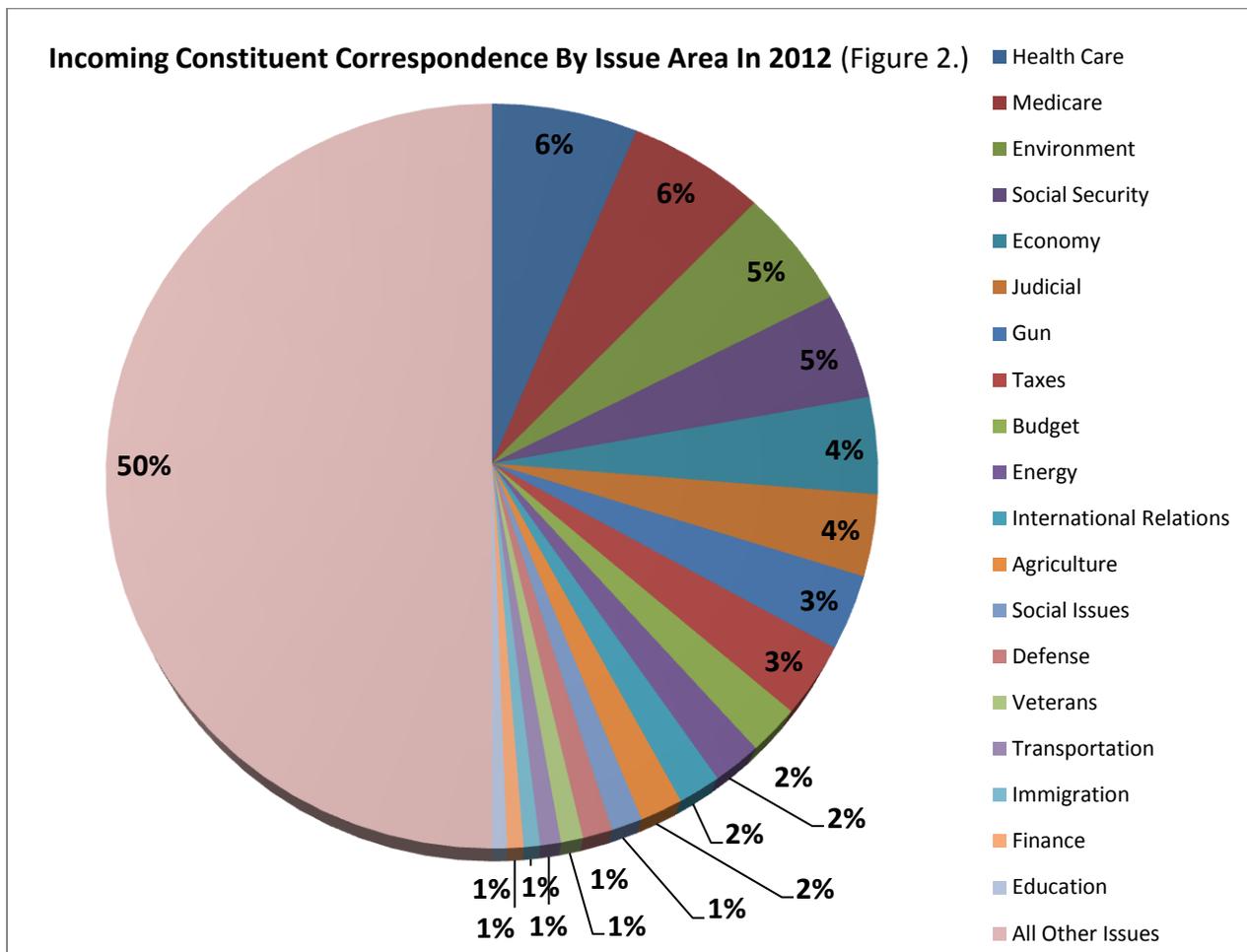
COMMUNICATIONS BY ISSUE AREA IN 2012

BACKGROUND

Between January 2012 and December 2012, the office of Dr. Dan Benishek received 55,238 pieces of constituent correspondence, including phone calls, letters, and emails. Dr. Benishek received a daily briefing of all incoming correspondence and was able to see how many individuals are contacting his office about the important issues facing Northern Michigan.

During 2012, 50% of the incoming constituent correspondence was on miscellaneous issues. The three largest specific issues of interest to constituents writing into Dr. Benishek’s office were health care (6 percent), Medicare (6 percent) and environmental issues (5 percent).

The graph below (Figure 2.) illustrates the complete breakdown of office correspondence by issue in 2012.



COMMUNICATIONS VOLUME BY MONTH IN 2012

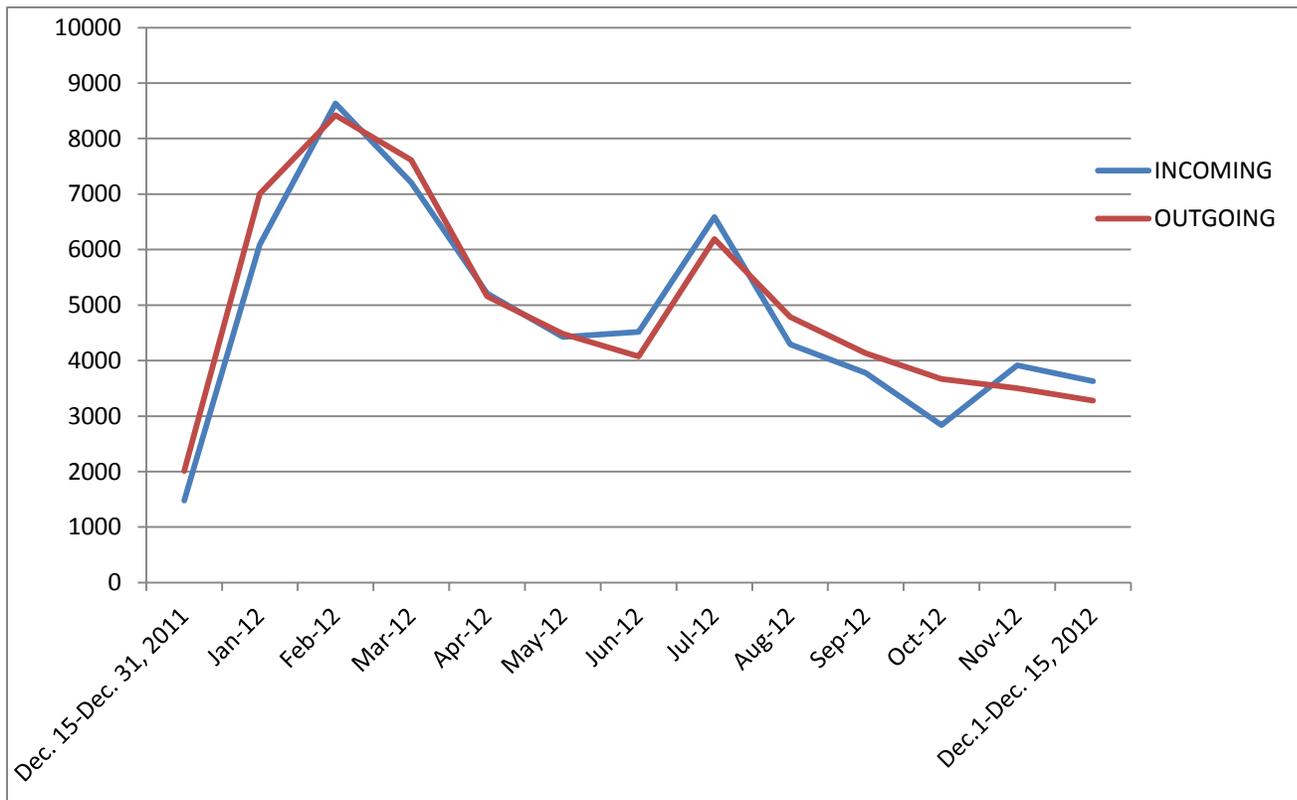
BACKGROUND

The frequency of incoming correspondence sent to Dr. Benishek’s office during 2012 fluctuated from month to month.

During 2012, the month of February saw the highest level of constituent correspondence with 8,635 pieces of correspondence. The month of October saw the lowest level of correspondence with 2,837 pieces. The monthly average for 2012 was approximately 4,800 pieces of correspondence.

The graph below (Figure 3.) illustrates the volume of constituent correspondence by month during 2012.

Constituent Correspondence and Feedback By Month During 2012 (Figure 3.)



VII. CONSTITUENT CASEWORK

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BACKGROUND

Dr. Benishek's district offices work to help constituents who need assistance dealing with federal agencies. According to the U.S. Census, Michigan's First Congressional District has a total population of 650,222 people. The median age of an individual in the First District is 44.3 years, with 18.7 percent of the population over 65 years of age. As a result of these demographics, Northern Michigan has a large number of individuals who are receiving federal government assistance through Social Security, Medicare or the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

According to the Social Security Administration, the First Congressional District has 179,276 Social Security beneficiaries (27 percent of the total population), which is the highest level of beneficiaries of any District in the State of Michigan. Additionally, Northern Michigan is also home to over 68,000 military veterans, some 13.7 percent of the District's total population.

With so many individuals working with the federal government, constituents often contact Dr. Benishek's offices for help with government entities such as Medicare, Social Security, the Veterans' Affairs Department, or local and state agencies.

PROCESS OF CONSTITUENT CASEWORK

During 2012, First District residents were served by four district offices in Northern Michigan. These offices are located in Iron Mountain, Marquette, Petoskey and Gaylord. Dr. Benishek has 9 staff members in the District who work directly with assisting constituents with federal agencies.

Constituents can request assistance with federal agencies by contacting one of these offices, stopping by an office, or contacting the offices through Dr. Benishek's official website. During the Congressman's public events in the district, caseworkers are always present to assist anyone attending the events.

Once being contacted by a constituent, a caseworker in Dr. Benishek's district offices who specializes in that specific issue investigates and assists on behalf of the individual. Details of cases are kept confidential.

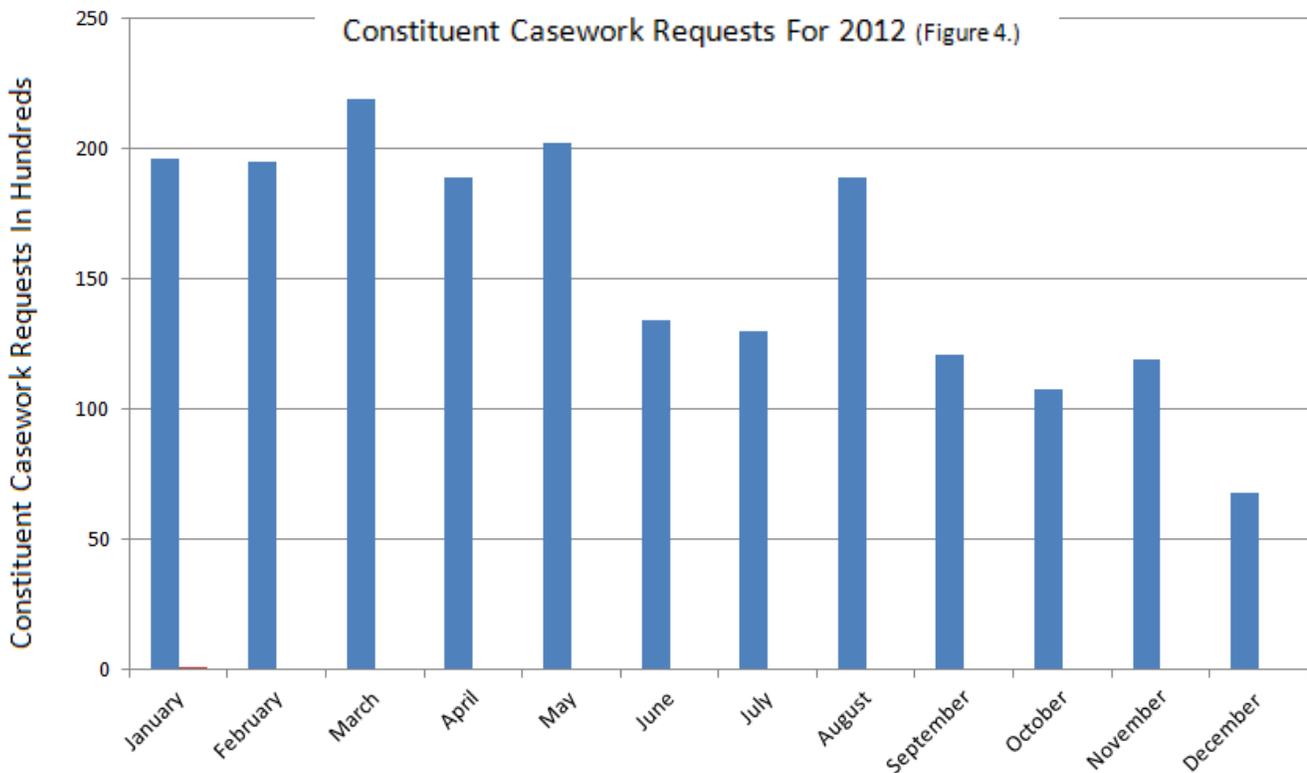
Below are some examples of casework assistance from Dr. Benishek's office in 2012:

- **Assisted veterans with getting the benefits they were owed through the Department of Veterans' Affairs**
- **Worked with the Army Corp of Engineers on various issues with positive results**
- **Worked with private companies to break through government red tape**
- **Assisted in getting our seniors benefits through the Social Security Administration**
- **Assisted constituents in an effort to prevent foreclosures**

CONSTITUENT CASES IN 2012

During 2012, Dr. Benishek's office received 1,919 casework requests, an average of 19 per day. The highest number of requests in a single month was 219 received in the month of March.

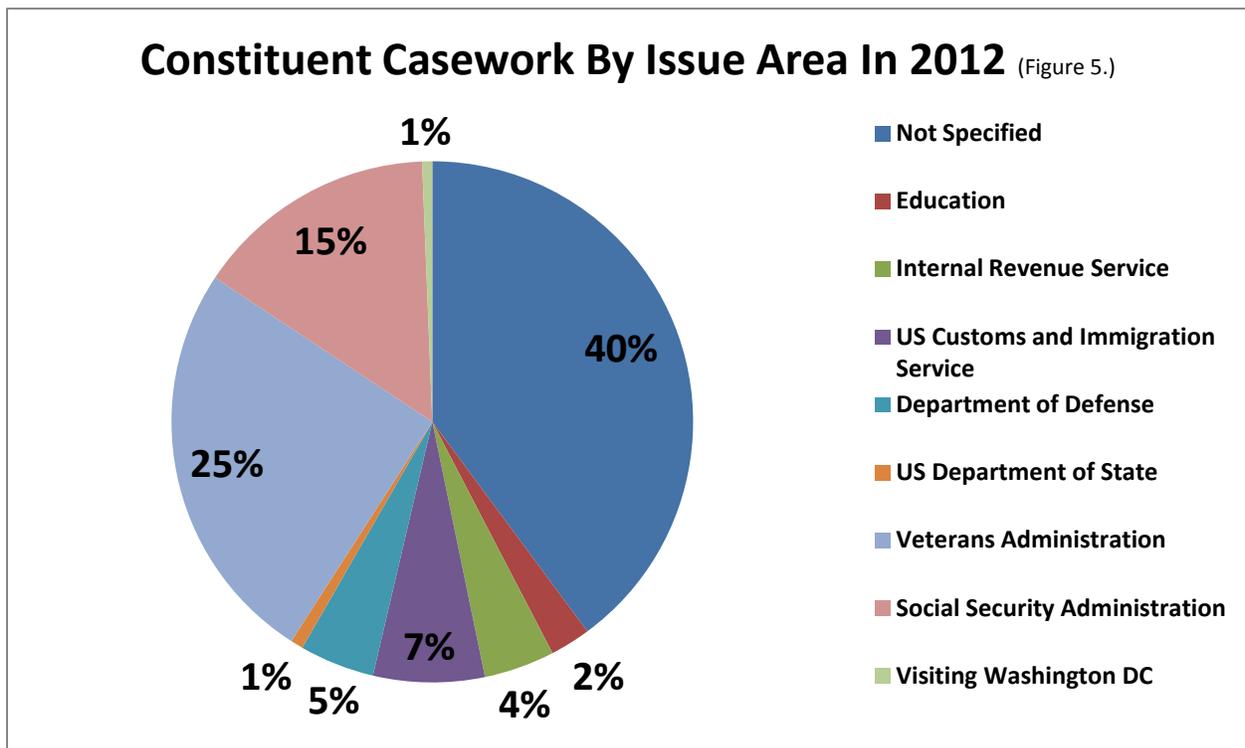
The graph below (Figure 4.) illustrates the amount of casework requests received by Dr. Benishek during 2012.



CONSTITUENT CASES BY ISSUE IN 2012

During 2012, Dr. Benishek's offices received constituent assistance requests on a wide array of issues. The issue area with the most number of constituent requests was nonspecific, equaling 40 percent of all incoming requests. The second most frequent issue area was veterans' affairs, equaling 25 percent of incoming requests.

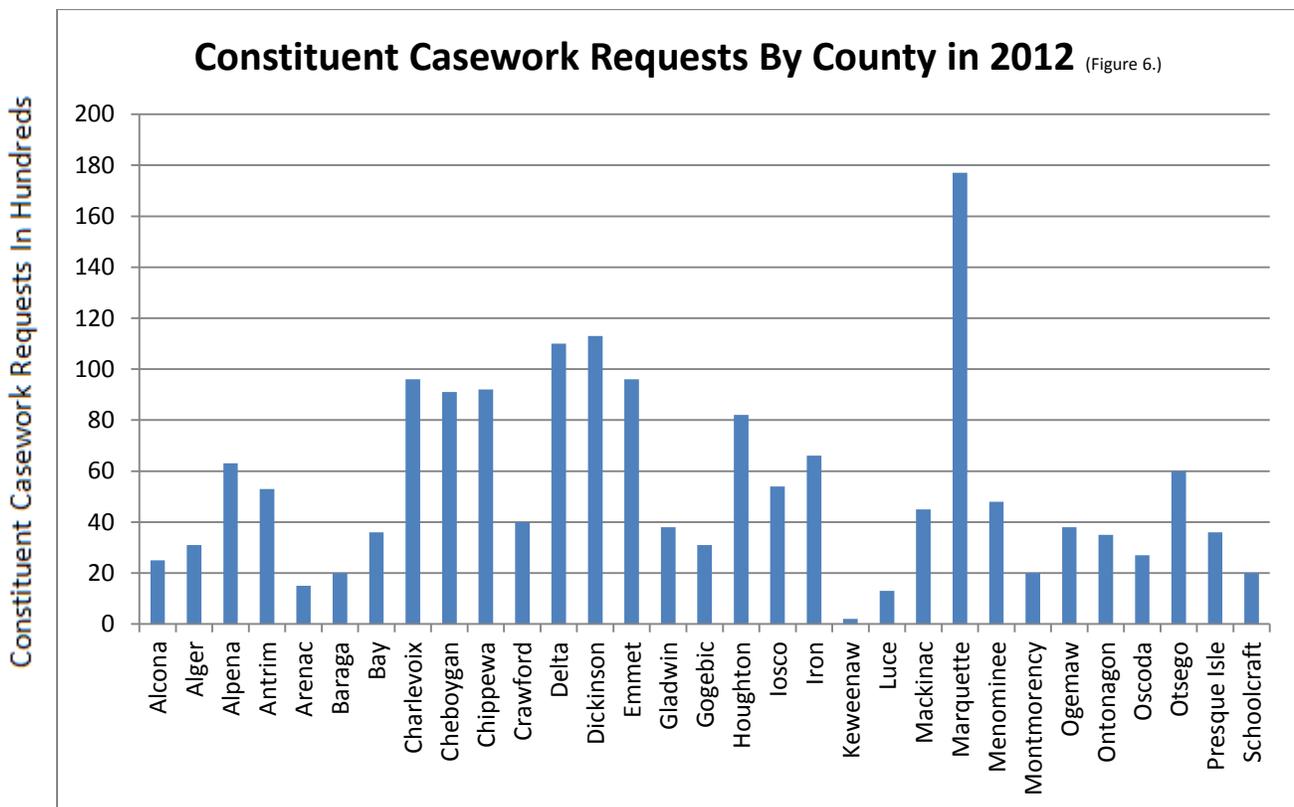
The graph below (Figure 5.) illustrates casework requests received by Dr. Benishek during 2012 based on issue area.



CONSTITUENT CASES BY COUNTY IN 2012

Dr. Benishek’s office received 1,919 cases during 2012. These cases were from every county in Michigan’s First Congressional District. The First District has 31 counties and encompasses some 33,189 square miles. During 2012, Marquette County had the most incoming casework requests with 177. Keweenaw County (Michigan’s least populated county) had the fewest requests, with 2 during 2012.

The graph below (Figure 6.) illustrates casework requests received by Dr. Benishek during 2012 based on county.



VIII. SPECIAL INITIATIVES

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VETERANS ROUNDTABLE MEETING WITH CHAIRMAN JEFF MILLER

BACKGROUND

On October 19 2012, Dr. Benishek co-hosted a public veterans' meeting with Congressman Jeff Miller (R-FL), the Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. This event, which was held at the AmVets Center in Elk Rapids, was aimed at providing local veterans with insight into the work and focus of the Veterans' Affairs Committee. Other participants in the discussion included: David Leonard, Director of the Department of Veterans Affairs Detroit Regional Office, Major General Mike Lehnert, Vice-Chair for the Student Veterans of America, Jason Allen, Michigan's Senior Deputy Director for Veterans Affairs, and Tom Brown, Senior Vice Commander of AmVets Post 114.

On The Issue...

"Chairman Miller and I were pleased to learn more about their views on how we can improve the VA system and ensure our nation's heroes get timely access to the benefits they have earned."

--Rep. Dan Benishek M.D.



Dr. Benishek and VA Committee Chairman Jeff Miller host a special veterans' public meeting in Elk Rapids, Michigan on October 11, 2012.

KEY ACTIONS TAKEN

- ✓ Dozens of local veterans and Veterans Service Officers (VSO) attended the roundtable with Chairman Miller in Elk Rapids on October 19.
- ✓ At the public meeting, veterans were able to express their concerns—ranging from issues with the VA system in general to personal health problems—directly to Chairman Miller and Dr. Benishek.
- ✓ Staff members worked with Major General Lehnert following the conclusion of the roundtable conclusion to ensure all questions were adequately answered and addressed.
- ✓ As a result of the roundtable, ten new casework files were opened by Benishek district staff to assist veterans with the VA bureaucracy.
- ✓ During the roundtable meeting, Dr. Benishek was also able to answer additional questions regarding his pending legislation, the "Surplus Property for Veterans Act of 2012."

STATUS

Following the veterans meeting with Chairman Miller, Dr. Benishek and his staff are continuing to develop an action plan to address the concerns raised by veterans in the meeting. Specific casework issues were addressed by Dr. Benishek's casework staff in attendance at the meeting.

NORTHERN MICHIGAN JOBS FAIR

BACKGROUND

On February 24, 2012, Dr. Benishek hosted a joint jobs fair with Rep. Reid Ribble (WI-08) in Marinette, Wisconsin, directly across the Menominee River from Menominee, Michigan. The goal of the job fair was to match the many qualified job seekers in Northern Michigan with job providers hoping to find applicants to fill needed positions.

The jobs fair was held at UW-Marinette's campus and contained two breakout sessions that allowed participants to gain advice specific for midcareer professionals and individuals new to the workforce.

On The Issue...

"With far too many people out of work in Northern Michigan, I see this job fair as an excellent opportunity to connect employers with the many talented job seekers in our area."

--Rep. Dan Benishek M.D.



Dr. Dan Benishek attends the joint job fair in Marinette/Menominee he hosted with Rep. Reid Ribble.

KEY ACTIONS TAKEN

- ✓ Approximately 400 area job seekers attended the February 12 Jobs fair.
- ✓ At the jobs fair, 57 job providers had representatives present. Some of these employers included: Cliff's Natural Resources, Engineered Machined Products, Inc., Grede, LLC, Hannahville Indian Community Island Resort and Casino, Marmen Computing, Inc., Marquette Branch Prison, Michigan Works! The Job Force Board, Northern Michigan University, Northern Star Industries, Inc. / BOSS Snowplow Company, Oldenburg Group Inc., Tendercare Health Center, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs – Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center, US Special Delivery, Inc., and Walmart Stores.
- ✓ Speakers at the jobs fair breakout sessions included Jim Golembeski from the Bay Area Workforce Development and Robert Micheau, from the Michigan Works! Job Force Board.
- ✓ Anonymous surveys after the jobs fair indicated that participants were very satisfied with the results. Comments included: "Very well organized. I found jobs meeting my qualifications" and "very well was very organized and well run."
- ✓ Survey results indicated that job seekers spoke with an average of 13 employers during the event.

STATUS

Before and after the Northern Michigan jobs fair, Dr. Benishek's main priority in Congress has been to support policies that will improve the economy. As a result of the jobs fair, 20 individuals were hired and many others received interviews.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION ROUNDTABLE MEETINGS

BACKGROUND

On October 11th and December 10th of 2012, Dr. Benishek held a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Roundtable with key stakeholders from the Marquette and the Houghton areas to discuss public/private partnerships and initiatives to inspire STEM workforce in the 21st Century. Representatives from local high schools, businesses, and higher educational institutions discussed the aspects of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics in school curriculum in an effort to provide students with the education they need to better their futures.

On The Issue...

“It’s essential we give our students a quality education so that they are prepared to pursue the jobs of the 21st Century.”

-Rep. Dan Benishek M.D.



Dr. Benishek takes part his STEM Roundtable meeting at Michigan Tech in Houghton on December 10, 2012.

KEY ACTIONS TAKEN

- ✓ Participants at the science and tech roundtables included: Northern Michigan businesses (like Cliffs Natural Resources, Rio Tinto Eagle Mine, CMS Energy & Oldenburg Group), K-12 public schools from throughout the Upper Peninsula, Michigan Technological University, and Northern Michigan University.
- ✓ The science and tech roundtable meetings were inspired by several hearings that Dr. Benishek took part in with the Committee on Science, Space and Technology. Some of these hearings included: “STEM Education in Action: Local Schools, Non-Profits, and Businesses” (April 18, 2012), and “The Role of Research Universities in Securing America’s Future Prosperity: Challenges and Expectations” (June 17, 2012).
- ✓ Dr. Benishek listened to all stakeholders—from local and national business owners and operators to school superintendents and university professors—join in a common complaint. While more and more students are committed to STEM and technical education, the common core curriculum requirements established by “No Child Left Behind” leave little room for technical education.

STATUS

Following the Dr. Benishek is committed to finding solutions to allow for increased access to local control in the classroom. Dr. Benishek continues to develop an action plan and will work with his colleagues on localization methods during the 113th Congress.

PROTECTING NORTHERN MICHIGAN'S FARMERS

BACKGROUND

In the early part of 2012, a series of warm weather episodes followed by a late freeze in the Lower Peninsula resulted in one of the worst fruit crop damages many farmers have faced in a lifetime. Estimates indicated that more than 90 percent of Michigan's apple, cherry, and peach crops may have been lost in this freeze. More than 85 percent of juice grape crops were also lost and as much as 10 percent of the asparagus crop was lost or damaged. It was estimated that the economic loss due to this fruit and vegetable damage exceeded \$200 million.

On The Issue...

"My office is here to help our farmers and their families obtain the disaster relief they need."

-Rep. Dan Benishek M.D.



Dr. Benishek and Rep. Dave Camp tour damaged fruit farms in Lower Michigan due to warm weather followed by a hard freeze in the spring of 2012.

KEY ACTIONS TAKEN

- ✓ Immediately following news of the spreading crop disaster in the spring of 2012, Dr. Benishek joined Rep. Dave Camp on a tour of farms impacted by the freeze.
- ✓ After returning from the tour, Dr. Benishek led the Michigan Congressional delegation in sending a letter to Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack encouraging him to release much-needed disaster assistance for affected farmers.
- ✓ Throughout the summer of 2012, Dr. Benishek continued to visit with farmers and agribusiness owners to discuss their concerns.
- ✓ Dr. Benishek advocated for a long-term farm bill on behalf of Michigan farmers and agribusinesses. Unfortunately, the 2012 Farm Bill did not come before the floor of the House during the 112th Congress. However, as a new member of the House Committee on Agriculture, Dr. Benishek looks forward to advocating for a long-term farm bill on behalf of his constituents in 2013.

STATUS

Following the crop freeze, Governor Rick Snyder signed legislation that allocated up to \$300 million in low-interest loans for affected framers. This assistance was in the form of low interest loans that were previously allocated funds and did not increase federal spending. Dr. Benishek's office encouraged area farmers to contact their local USDA Farm Service Agency office to apply for loan assistance.

U.S. SERVICE ACADEMY DAYS

BACKGROUND

As a Member of Congress, Dr. Benishek had the privilege to nominate young people from Michigan's First District to the various United States service academies in 2012. Every Member of Congress may have up to five cadets and midshipmen from their district at each of the service academies at one time. The service academies accepting congressional nominations are the U.S. Air Force Academy, U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, U.S. Military Academy, and U.S. Naval Academy. The U.S. Coast Guard Academy does not accept nominations as it has its own process for selecting candidates.

KEY ACTIONS TAKEN

- ✓ In May 2012, the Service Academy Nomination process was announced by Dr. Benishek's office by contacting high schools throughout Michigan's First District.
- ✓ Accepted applications from May 15, 2012, through October 26, 2012. In total, the office received 10 applications from qualified young people throughout the district.
- ✓ Held three Service Academy Days in Grayling, Marquette, and Sault Ste. Marie with young students and representatives from the Military Service Academies.
- ✓ Assembled a Service Academy Advisory Board composed of current and former members of the military in Michigan's First District
- ✓ On November 28, 2012, the Board convened in Dr. Benishek's Gaylord and Marquette district offices to interview the applicants.
- ✓ In mid-December 2012, the selected applicants were notified that their names were submitted to the service academies for consideration.

On The Issue...

"Our region is home to many high caliber men and women who will make excellent candidates for our nation's Service academies."

-Rep. Dan Benishek M.D.



Members of Dr. Benishek's Service Academy Advisory Board conduct applicant interviews in Gaylord on November 28, 2012.

STATUS

Based on the Board members' recommendations, Dr. Benishek submitted 10 nominations to the service academies on December 17, 2012. The Service Academy Advisory Board members and nominees from Michigan's First District will be announced in February 2013 once all Congressional nominations have been submitted to the academies. The respective academies will then notify a majority of the appointees by late April 2013.

BREAKING THE VETERANS DISABILITY CLAIMS BACKLOG

BACKGROUND

Michigan's veterans are not receiving their benefits in a timely manner. During 2012, 66 percent of VA disability compensation claims are backlogged (over 125 days old). In the Detroit Regional VA Office, which processes disability claims for Michigan veterans, the average time it takes to complete a claim is 15 to 18 months.

In response, Dr. Benishek released a plan in May 2012 called "Breaking the Backlog" that is aimed at ensuring our nation's heroes have timely access to the benefits they have earned. As a doctor who worked at VA hospital for 20 years, Dr. Benishek knows firsthand the frustrations for working with the VA bureaucracy.

On The Issue...

"Making sure our veterans have timely access to the benefits they have earned should be a top priority of Congress."

-Rep. Dan Benishek M.D.



Dr. Dan Benishek meets with a veteran from Northern Michigan during the return of an Upper Peninsula Honor Flight in May 2012.

KEY ACTIONS TAKEN

- ✓ In May 2012, Dr. Benishek released his detailed "Breaking the Backlog" action plan that included three important steps. These steps included: 1). Ensuring soldiers leaving the military must have a seamless transition into the VA system, 2). Streamlining the claims process by adopting 21st Century solutions, such as full implementation of digital records, electronic disability benefit questioners, and giving the VA access to electronic databases housing veterans' records of military service, and 3.) Improving access for our veterans at any regional VA facility.
- ✓ To get feedback on this action plan, Dr. Benishek held a set of public listening session with veterans in Northern Michigan in May 2012. These sessions were held in Charlevoix and Iron Mountain.
- ✓ In 2012, Dr. Benishek introduced H.R. 6297: "Reducing Barriers to Veterans' Benefits Act." This legislation will help ease the overall backlog by allowing the VA to more quickly process hearing loss and tinnitus claims, which will free up needed resources to develop the more complicated claims.

STATUS

After the introduction of the "Breaking the Backlog" plan, Dr. Benishek continues to explore legislative ways to help improve the disability claims backlog during the 113th Congress. As a member of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Dr. Benishek will continue to work with his colleagues in the coming term to find solutions for Northern Michigan's veterans.

PROTECTING MICHIGAN'S GREAT LAKES

BACKGROUND

Michigan's First Congressional District has over 1,600 miles of shoreline—the most in the continental United States and is the only District with shoreline on three of the five Great Lakes. As a lifelong resident of Northern Michigan, Dr. Benishek knows how important the Great Lakes are to the region and has been actively working to help protect this resource for future generations of Michiganders.

The Great Lakes currently face threats from invasive species, lower lake levels, and harbor maintenance issues. Dr. Benishek has been working to learn more about these issues and find solutions to address them.

On The Issue...

"As a lifelong resident of Northern Michigan, I know firsthand how important it is to protect our Great Lakes and waterways."

-Rep. Dan Benishek M.D.



Asian carp, pictured above, are an invasive fish species that pose a significant threat to the Great Lakes.

KEY ACTIONS TAKEN

- ✓ Dr. Benishek authored a letter to his colleagues in the House on January 30, 2012, expressing his strong support for the "RAMP Act," a bill designed to mandate all money collected for the federal Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund be used to maintain and dredge harbors and ports.
- ✓ On December 4, 2012, Dr. Benishek attended and spoke at a Great Lakes Task Force briefing on lake levels, including recent analyses of historically-low levels and policy considerations to help the problem.
- ✓ On August 22, 2012, Dr. Benishek cosponsored the "Asian Carp Prevention Act of 2012," authored by Rep. Mike Rogers (MI-08), directs the Secretary of the Army to coordinate and spearhead efforts to prevent the spread of Asian carp into the Great Lakes by taking such actions as installing new barriers, improving locks in the Great Lakes region, and blocking the spread of the carp at the Brandon Road Lock in Illinois.
- ✓ On January 4, 2013, Dr. Benishek introduced legislation that will designate as "wilderness" 32,000 acres of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore in the Lower Peninsula.

STATUS

During the 113th Congress, Dr. Benishek will continue to work with his colleagues and other members of the Great Lakes Task Force to enact policies that will help protect Michigan's fresh water and ensure our children and grandchildren will be able to enjoy the Great Lakes for generations to come.

FIGHTING FOR COUNTY ROAD 595

BACKGROUND

County Road 595 in Marquette County is a proposed, new 21.4 mile primary road, running north-south between U.S. 41 and County Road Triple A. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has requested the EPA remove their objections.

The road project has been extensively analyzed by the DEQ, the EPA, and the Marquette County Road Commission. The proposed route has been modified to avoid local wetlands and significantly reduce any environmental impacts.

On The Issue...

“We can’t let new jobs in Northern Michigan be blocked by federal red tape and bureaucratic roadblocks.”

--Rep. Dan Benishek M.D.



Rep. Benishek and State Senator Tom Casperson meet with local officials to discuss the County Road 595 Project in Marquette on November 5, 2012.

KEY ACTIONS TAKEN

- ✓ During the year, Dr. Benishek voices his support for the County Road 595 project. On August 2, 2012, a representative of Dr. Benishek speaks at the CR 595 public hearing in Marquette in support of the project.
- ✓ On September 17, Dr. Benishek speaks with Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Director Dan Wyant after the State of Michigan requests the EPA remove its objections to the project.
- ✓ On November 5, 2012, Rep. Benishek led a joint effort in Congress to promote Northern Michigan jobs by sending a letter urging the EPA to take action and allow for the construction of County Road 595.
- ✓ In Marquette on November 1, Dr. Benishek and State Senator Tom Casperson met with Marquette County local officials to discuss what can be done to advance the road project.
- ✓ On December 5, 2012, Dr. Benishek’s office requests to meet with the EPA, MDEQ, and Marquette Road Commission. The EPA eventually delays the meeting.

STATUS

On January 3, 2013, the MDEQ announced they would not be granting a permit for County Road 595. Dr. Benishek stated he was “very disappointed” by the decision and has announced he plans to hold a Congressional field hearing to further investigate the situation.

KEEPING THE CHEBOYGAN HOSPITAL OPEN

BACKGROUND

In the first few months of 2012, the Cheboygan Memorial Health Center (CMH) temporarily closed its doors and left residents of the area without access to medical care. Following a financial dispute with the federal government, on March 1, 2012 the hospital officially filed for bankruptcy. The hospital was the area's largest employer.

Dr. Benishek and his staff worked closely for months with the Cheboygan Memorial Hospital, CMS (Medicare), and local stakeholders to prevent its closure. Unfortunately, the hospital facility did close. However, after months of work, Dr. Benishek was pleased that McLaren Health ultimately purchased the Cheboygan Hospital and was able to retain some medical services at Cheboygan.

On The Issue...

"As a doctor for nearly 30 years, I understand the importance of local access to health care for Cheboygan's citizens."

--Rep. Dan Benishek M.D.



A view of the Cheboygan Memorial Health Center in 2012.

KEY ACTIONS TAKEN

- ✓ On March 20, Dr. Benishek urged CMS (Medicare) in a letter to do everything possible to keep the Cheboygan Hospital open.
- ✓ On April 9, Dr. Benishek's office sent a letter to CMS requesting officials from their agency attend meeting in Cheboygan regarding bankruptcy proceedings, as well as representatives from CMH, McLaren, and Sen. Levin and Sen. Stabenow's offices.
- ✓ On April 10, Dr. Benishek visited Cheboygan and held a meeting with all stakeholders to discuss hospital closure and what could be done to help the situation. Dr. Benishek also visited the hospital facility.
- ✓ On April 23, during a rally to reopen the hospital, McLaren Health announces it has reached a deal with CMS to purchase the hospital.
- ✓ On April 30, Dr. Benishek's staff confirmed with McLaren Health, concerning the sale of the hospital.

STATUS

On April 30, 2012, McLaren Health purchased Cheboygan Memorial Hospital and was able to reopen some medical services at the facility for the residents of Cheboygan.

IX. BENISHEK 'BY THE NUMBERS'

CONTENTS:

Benishek 'By The Numbers'183

IN NORTHERN MICHIGAN

Total Number of Miles Travelled.....	25,940
Number of Flights Back to Michigan.....	19
Number of Counties Visited.....	31
Number of Public Events/Classroom Visits/Farm Tours.....	30
Number of Company Tours With Area Employers.....	114
Number of Constituents Reached on Telephone Town Hall Meetings.....	120,000

IN WASHINGTON, DC

Number of Votes Taken.....	650
Number of Authored Bills.....	3
Number of Cosponsored Bills.....	55
Number of Floor Speeches.....	10
Number of Meetings.....	697
Number of Office Visitors.....	824
Number of Processed Constituent Letters, Emails, Phone Calls.....	55,238
News Statements.....	95
Facebook posts, Tweets, and YouTube videos.....	439

X. THE NEW FIRST DISTRICT

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THE NEW FIRST DISTRICT

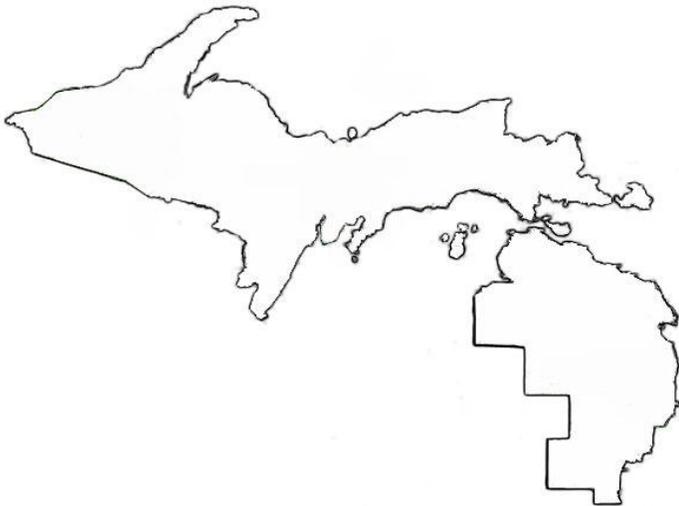
BACKGROUND

As dictated by the U.S. Constitution, congressional apportionment is a decennial process completed after the official U.S. Census. Following the completion of each census, Congressional district boundaries are redrawn to reflect changes in population in all 50 states.

The 2010 Census revealed that Michigan's population was 9,876,187, a .1 percent decrease in population from 2000. The population of Michigan's First Congressional District was 650,222 people. Because the United States population grew by 9.9 percent, the population size of each Congressional District was also increased to 710,767 per district.

Because of these population changes, the boundaries of Michigan's First Congressional District were modified by the state legislature in 2011. The First District now contains 5 ½ new counties: Benzie, Grand Traverse, Leelanau, Manistee, Mason (partial), and Kalkaska. The First District lost 4 ½ counties: Arenac, Bay (partial), Gladwin, Iosco, and Ogemaw.

The maps below illustrate the boundary changes for Michigan's First Congressional District for the 113th Congress:



*Michigan's First Congressional District
in the 112th Congress.*



*Michigan's First Congressional District
in the 113th Congress.*

XI. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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At the conclusion of this document, I wanted to acknowledge the members of my Congressional staff who contributed to the research, construction and proofing of this document.

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These individuals have worked hard over the past year to serve the people of Michigan's First Congressional District and I am forever grateful for their efforts.