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## VI. Official Communications

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January 7, 2011 | Repeal the Health Care Law

### Congress of the United States

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

*"Mr. Speaker,*

*While campaigning this fall, people in Northern Michigan made it clear that they were not happy with the government takeover of health care.*

*"That is why I am pleased that one of my first votes in Congress will allow me to keep a promise to my constituents and vote to repeal that legislation.*

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**"I invite all Members to join us in repealing this law and developing realistic health care reform that lowers costs, improves insurance options and puts patients, not government bureaucrats, at the center of health care."**

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*"As a surgeon who has spent more than 30 years working directly with patients, I view the government takeover of our healthcare system as an attack on the doctor/patient relationship.*

*"Now, as a member of the Freshman Class of 2010, I invite all Members to join us in repealing this law and developing realistic health care reform that lowers costs, improves insurance options and puts patients, not government bureaucrats, at the center of health care. "*

January 19, 2011 | Supporting Health Care Repeal

### Congress of the United States

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

*“Mr. Speaker,*

*Before coming to this House, I spent over thirty years as a surgeon. I worked closely with patients to provide care and earn their trust.*

*This doctor/patient relationship is the very foundation of the practice of medicine. Unfortunately, the health care law passed during the last Congress does not build on the doctor/patient relationship, but hinders it.*

*Full of hidden costs and red tape, the law over regulates and limits patient choice.*

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***“This doctor/patient relationship is the very foundation of the practice of medicine.”***

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*We need to repeal this bill. Start over, and craft health care legislation that puts patients first.*

*Repealing this bill does not end health care reform; it gives us a second chance to tackle the problems of our system, while refocusing on what makes our system strong.”*

April 14, 2011 | Passage of 2011 Continuing Resolution

### Congress of the United States

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

*“Mr. Speaker,*

*This day marks an historic moment for our country. The rise in federal spending that has defined the last three years has ended.*

*The bill that we will pass in the House today contains the largest cuts since the end of World War II.*

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***“The bill is by no means perfect. I, like many Americans, want more cuts. And I believe we will get them. These cuts are just the start.”***

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*The words of Winston Churchill—spoken during a different battle—echo true today. He stated, “this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.”*

*Mr. Speaker, it is time to move beyond last year's business and start doing the work the American people sent us here to do. Tomorrow, we take up legislation that will save us not billions...but trillions....*

*And as this House considers addressing the debt ceiling, the Senate and the President need to know—these cuts do not represent the end...they represent our resolve to continue the fight.”*

May 5, 2011 | Increasing Oil Drilling

### Congress of the United States

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

*“Mr. Speaker,*

*This morning a gallon of gas in my hometown of Iron River, Michigan costs \$4.29. Unfortunately, most people expect to be plagued with even higher prices in coming weeks.*

*I believe we in Congress know there is no silver bullet that will lower prices at the pump.*

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**“However, we do have a responsibility to craft policy and pass legislation that increases the supply of crude oil which will be produced here at home.”**

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*As members of Congress, it is our duty to take these actions immediately to help lessen the pain for families in Michigan's First District and across the country.*

*Mr. Speaker, we need to find a long term solution to high fuel prices and I believe the full day markup we held in Committee last month was the first step.*

*Passing this bill today is the next step.*

*I yield back my time.”*

May 23, 2011 | VA Small Business Act

### Congress of the United States

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

*“Thank you Mr. Chairman, and I want to thank Congressman Stutzman for his leadership on this bill.*

*Before coming to Congress, I spent 20 years as a physician working in the VA health care system, and I am fortunate to represent the 68,000 veterans who call Michigan's First District home.*

*When those veterans in my district decided to serve their country, they gave up the opportunity to pursue experience in a civilian career. Recognizing this sacrifice, Congress enacted laws giving service-disabled, veteran-owned small businesses preference when competing for government contracts.*

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***“By expediting the debarment process, and strengthening the penalties for those who misrepresent their status, this bill provides more protection for service-disabled, veteran-owned small businesses.”***

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*Unfortunately, in a 2009 report, the GAO estimated that more than \$100 million had been awarded to firms that fraudulently claimed service-disabled, veteran-owned small business status, due to "significant control weaknesses" within the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the Small Business Administration.*

*By expediting the debarment process, and strengthening the penalties for those who misrepresent their status, this bill provides more protection for service-disabled, veteran-owned small businesses. I urge my colleagues to vote with me in support of this bill.”*

May 31, 2011 | House Plan to Save Medicare

### Congress of the United States

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

*“Over the past couple weeks we've seen an increase in the false attacks on this House's plan to save Medicare for future generations and prevent America from falling into an abyss of debt and deficits.*

*These falsehoods represent a new low in political attacks. And to those who are trying to scare the country's seniors...I say "shame on you". America deserves better.*

*Before coming to Congress this year, I spent 25 years as a physician treating patients in Northern Michigan...many of whom were on Medicare.*

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***“By expediting the debarment process, and strengthening the penalties for those who misrepresent their status, this bill provides more protection for service-disabled, veteran-owned small businesses.”***

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*I find it ridiculous that some on the other side of the aisle accuse us of wanting to hurt seniors. The fact is, we put forth a plan that ensures our children and grandchildren have access to Medicare and doesn't cut benefits for those at or near retirement.*

*These false attacks are nothing more than a smokescreen from the other side. The Democrats plan calls for bankruptcy and rationing.*

*I ask my colleagues on the other side to stop playing politics and do what the American people sent us here to do....work together and face reality.”*

October 25, 2011 | Forestry Conference

### Congress of the United States

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

*“Mr. Speaker,*

*Last week, instead of making campaign bus stops and touting more stimulus spending, President Obama may have been better served coming to Rhinelander, Wisconsin for a conference on jobs in the timber industry.*

*At the conference, Representatives Cravaak, Duffy, Ribble and myself, along with Chief Tidwell of the U.S. Forest Service, met with loggers, mill operators and forestry experts...and the consensus was clear...bureaucratic roadblocks and lack of direction are preventing the responsible harvest of federal timberlands and killing jobs.*

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**“Mr. Speaker, this is not about clear cutting our nation's forests. Responsible timber harvests make for healthier forests. They also create real jobs and grow the economy.”**

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*As it stands, timber in the forests of the Great Lakes and across America is literally rotting on the stump and the federal government's bureaucratic snares are allowing it to happen.*

*This cannot continue. It is time President Obama and Congress recognize that the simplest and quickest way to create jobs is to release the handcuffs of overregulation and red tape.”*

October 26, 2011 | Pro-Jobs Mining Legislation

### Congress of the United States

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

*“Mr. Speaker,*

*I came to the floor to speak in favor of this bill because frankly, I find it hard believe what I am hearing from those arguing against it.*

*Does anyone honestly believe that passing this bill will create jobs only for an army of robots?*

*According to one study, this bill may create as many as 3,000 real jobs.*

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**“Congress needs to demonstrate to the American people that it supports mining jobs and developing our nation's resources, as this bill does in a way that is both environmentally responsible and culturally respectful.”**

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*Mr. Speaker, my district in Northern Michigan is a long way from Arizona, but we too have a rich history of copper mining. Today, people need copper in their daily lives. And the growing demand means we need more mines- creating more jobs in Arizona and Michigan.*

*My own father was a miner. Congress needs to demonstrate to the American people that it supports mining jobs and developing our nation's resources, as this bill does in a way that is both environmentally responsible and culturally respectful.*

*I urge passage of the bill and yield back my time.”*

November 2, 2011 | Bipartisan Speech With Rep. Hansen Clarke

### Congress of the United States

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

*“Mr. Speaker,*

*There has been a lot of talk about the partisanship and venom in Washington this year. And while we will certainly see fierce debates in the future, I believe members of this body can still come together and find common ground.*

*On the surface, my colleague Hansen Clarke and I are very different. He is a lawyer representing the city of Detroit with a liberal voting record. I am a conservative physician representing rural Northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula.*

*In August, I had the opportunity to head down to Michigan's 13th District in Detroit. There we toured employers such as Edward C. Levy Company, Mercy Primary Care Center and got to have some gyros in Greek town. It was great to learn more about the District and be back in Detroit where I did my medical training.*

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***“Next week, Congressman Clarke will tour with me in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. We will be meeting with area employers in Marquette and Escanaba, and will be getting a chance to see the splendor of Lake Superior with a visit to Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore in Munising.”***

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*Next week, Congressman Clarke will tour with me in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. We will be meeting with area employers in Marquette and Escanaba, and will be getting a chance to see the splendor of Lake Superior with a visit to Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore in Munising. I hope Hansen will even get to try one of Northern Michigan's famous pasties for lunch.*

*We believe that neither party has a monopoly on good ideas and that by working together we can help shape a better future for our children and grandchildren.*

*Despite our differences in opinion on many issues, we both recognize that America remains a place in the world like no other and that with liberty, courage and hard work there is no limit to one's destiny.*

*I encourage all the members of this chamber do pair up and schedule a visit to different district.*

*Congressman Clarke: I am honored to call you my friend, and I look forward to having you in Upper Michigan next week.”*

November 7, 2011 | Supporting The S.S. *Badger*

### Congress of the United States

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

*“Mr. Speaker,*

*I thank the gentleman for yielding. And I appreciate my fellow freshman and colleague from Michigan for his leadership on this issue.*

*Mr. Speaker, this is a simple amendment that addresses a growing problem with our friends at the EPA- their love of bureaucratic red tape. I represent a district with more Great Lakes coast line than any other.*

*Shipping and ferries are a part of the Great Lakes heritage. The S.S. Badger continues this tradition- transporting travelers, cars, trucks and equipment across Lake Michigan.*

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***“Shipping and ferries are a part of the Great Lakes heritage. The S.S. Badger continues this tradition—transporting travelers, cars, trucks and equipment across Lake Michigan.”***

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*Don’t be confused. This amendment does not make the Badger exempt from EPA regulations. The EPA will continue to regulate discharge limits and other requirements. It simply keeps in place the current EPA regulations that recognize the Badger as a unique and historic vessel. Keeping the Badger operational means saving 1 million gallons in fuel from vehicles driving around the lake.*

*Passing this amendment is simple and commonsense. It allows a National Historic Place to continue to function on the Great Lakes.*

*I urge passage and yield back.”*

November 18, 2011 | Standing for Rural Health

### Congress of the United States

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

*“Mr. Speaker,*

*I spent 28 years as a physician practicing rural medicine, even serving on the board of my local hospital. I am well aware of the great financial difficulty most rural hospitals and clinics experience each year.*

*Today, I was pleased that the State of Michigan celebrated “Rural Health Day.” On behalf of the thousands of Michiganders that call small towns and farming communities home, my state’s Governor chose to recognize the hospitals and community-based centers that provide for the diverse and unique health care needs of these areas. Tonight, I would like to join the State of Michigan in raising awareness about the importance these providers bring to the communities that I represent.*

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**“While we recognize the importance of rural health today, I would be remiss if I did not mention one of the great rural health facilities in my district.”**

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*While we recognize the importance of rural health today, I would be remiss if I did not mention one of the great rural health facilities in my district. Many of my colleagues may have visited the Straits of Mackinac during a summer vacation, or perhaps they have seen the island featured on a “Pure Michigan” ad.*

*The Rural Health Clinic in St. Ignace is the single largest employer in the community, supporting not only the local township, but in addition the 900,000 plus seasonal visitors that depend upon the hospital for services each year. I recently received a distressing letter from Mr. Rodney Nelson, CEO of the Mackinac Straits Health System.*

Continued on page XXX.

*Mr. Nelson is very worried about the impact Medicare cuts may have on his patients, employees, and, ultimately, the ability to keep the doors to the hospital open.*

*Mr. Speaker, the Mackinac Straights Health System is one of the 25 hospitals in my district that are considered either "critical access" or "sole community" hospitals. Of these, 56% are already operating in the red.*

*Unlike urban areas, my constituents often do not have another option when seeking health care. In the case of the St. Ignace hospital, the next closest clinic is 50 miles away. What you may not know, Mr. Speaker, is that caring for patients in rural facilities is far more economic than providing urban care. In fact, rural patients cost less to treat in eight of the nine CMS regions.*

*As my colleagues and I discuss possible ways to trim the budget, I feel it is important to remember that without rural hospitals, many of my constituents would not have access to medical care. A 2% reduction in Medicare spending is estimated to cost 389 jobs in my district, as a direct result of the cuts to rural hospitals. If this number were raised to 10%, the figures would only get worse. At that point, 76% of the hospitals would be operating in the red, and the total economic impact is estimated to be nearly \$68 million, with 1,900 jobs lost.*

*Mr. Speaker, I don't need to tell anyone here that Northern Michigan can't afford to lose 1900 additional jobs, and my constituents can't afford to lose access to their sole source of health care. Mr. Speaker, if we force these cuts, we are not making smart reductions. We are forcing rural patients to travel longer distances to seek more expensive care. This just costs everyone more money. I urge my colleagues to exercise caution when considering reductions to Medicare programs, especially those specific to physicians, critical access and sole community hospitals.*

*I yield the remainder of my time."*

For Immediate Release:  
7 January 2011

Contact:  
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### **Dr. Benishek Delivers First Floor Comment as Member of Congress** -- Congressman Aims to Keep Promise to Support Repeal of Health Care --

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (R-MI-01) today delivered his first statement on the House floor, the full text of which follows:

“While campaigning this fall, people in Northern Michigan made it clear that they were not happy with the government takeover of health care.

That is why I am pleased that one of my first votes in Congress will allow me to keep a promise to my constituents and vote to repeal that legislation.

As a surgeon who has spent more than 30 years working directly with patients, I view the government takeover of our healthcare system as an attack on the doctor/patient relationship.

Now, as a member of the Freshman Class of 2010, I invite all Members to join us in repealing this law and developing realistic health care reform that lowers costs, improves insurance options and puts patients, not government bureaucrats, at the center of health care. “

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For Immediate Release:  
10 January 2011

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**Dr. Benishek on the Shooting of Congresswoman Giffords**  
-- Congressman Condemns the Crime as Heinous and Cowardly --

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (R-MI-01) today made the following statement in regard to the shooting of Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords:

“I am greatly saddened to have heard the devastating news concerning the shooting in Arizona. My thoughts and prayers are with Congresswoman Giffords, her family, friends, staff and all the victims of this truly heinous and cowardly act.

Unfortunately, I did not have the opportunity to get to know Rep. Giffords in the first days of the 112th Congress, but I pray for a speedy recovery.

This type of senseless act has no place in a civilized society. In a nation where we honor freedom of speech and open debate, this tragedy touches all of us.

It is my hope that those individuals who are responsible will be brought to justice and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.”

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For Immediate Release:  
19 January 2011

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### **Congressman Benishek Names Michigan Native As New Director** -- Public Policy Specialist to Lead Mobile Casework Staff --

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today announced the appointment of Ms. Lori Latham as his new district director to lead the staff operation in Michigan's First Congressional District.

Latham, a long time public policy specialist in Lansing, has worked as a staff member in the Michigan Legislature, managed a public health information campaign and, most recently, served as the primary spokesperson for the Michigan Health & Hospital Association.

In announcing the hiring, Benishek said, "As a newly elected representative, I am concerned about doing the best possible job in community outreach and constituent casework, so finding the right person to lead this effort in the district has been a priority."

The Iron Mountain physician added, "With Lori leading our staff I am very confident both citizens and taxpayers will have a serious, capable manager to advocate on Northern Michigan's behalf."

Latham, a native of DeWitt, is also enthusiastic about her new position. "I am excited to be joining Congressman Benishek in addressing the many concerns of the people of the First Congressional District," Latham said. "While Northern Michigan is facing economic challenges it remains one of Michigan's most beautiful regions. I know the entire staff is looking forward to providing excellent service to ensure the federal government is more accessible."

Because of the sprawling geography of Michigan's First District, constituents will also be served by 'mobile office' casework staff under Latham's direction.

Congressman Benishek noted, "Starting in February we will begin our mobile casework effort, systematically going town to town with a pre-announced schedule of constituent outreach stops. I very much look forward to participating in these meetings with citizens in need."

In her new position as district director, Latham will be responsible for 12 full and part-time assistants, as well as administering offices located in Iron Mountain (906-828-1581), Marquette (906-273-1661), Petoskey (231-348-0657), and Gaylord (989-448-8811).

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
24 January 2011

Contact:  
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### **Congressman Benishek Names Casework Staffers** -- Michiganders Appointed To Assist With Constituent Concerns --

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today announced the appointments of area residents to work in his offices across Michigan's First Congressional District. These Congressional staffers will be under the direction of newly named District Director, Lori Latham, and will be working principally to assist constituents with problems related to federal programs.

District Director Lori Latham observed, "I am very excited about the enthusiasm of the new staff we are assembling. We are anxious to be helpful, and we realize that we have a lot to learn."

"At a minimum, we hope to be as responsive and courteous as possible to all constituents in the First District. As a physician, Dan's professional focus was on personal, patient relations and, as his locally based staff, we hope to mirror that approach in the district," added Latham.

Due to the immense size of the First District, Latham also noted, "We are looking forward to introducing our 'mobile office' casework initiative, which will allow us to aid constituents from Houghton to Bay City." The new members of Benishek's staff include:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Hometown</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Office</b>
<b>Dan Blough</b>	Gaylord	Special Assistant	Gaylord
<b>Traci Jahnke</b>	Iron Mountain	Constituent Services Representative	Iron Mountain
<b>Keith Kazianka</b>	Iron Mountain	Constituent Services Representative	Iron Mountain
<b>Jesse Osmer</b>	Alpena	Special Assistant	Gaylord
<b>Denise Pallarito</b>	Gaylord	Constituent Services Representative	Gaylord
<b>Thom Hadfield</b>	<b>Mackinac Island</b>	Constituent Services Representative	Petoskey

Under the Congressional budget provided to Members, First District residents will be served by 10 full and part-time assistants. Congressman Benishek's new office locations are as follows:

<b>Gaylord</b>	<b>Petoskey*</b>	<b>Iron Mountain</b>	<b>Marquette**</b>
810 S. Otsego Ave., Ste 105 Gaylord, MI 49735-1780 Tel: 989-448-8811	200 Division St., Ste 178 Petoskey, MI 49770-2465 Tel: 231-348-0657	500 S. Stephenson Ave., Ste 500 Iron Mountain, MI 49801-3420 Tel: 906-828-1581	307 S. Front St., Ste 120 Marquette, MI 49855-4613 Tel: 906-273-1661

# # #

\* Petoskey: Satellite office with hours by appointment only.

\*\* Marquette: Office will not open until 2/3/2011.

For Immediate Release:  
26 January 2011

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### **Congressman Benishek On The State Of The Union Address** -- Representative Comments On President's Speech --

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

"As a new Member of Congress, I was privileged to attend President Barack Obama's State of the Union address. The State of the Union is a brilliant display of America's democracy, and I was honored to be part of it. While I disagreed with President Obama on several of his ideas, I valued the opportunity to learn more about his proposals for our country.

Though the President stressed the need for more economic growth during his address, I believe our focus must involve free market principles that produce an environment in which business can flourish. I remain committed to supporting proposals in the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress that spur private sector job creation in Northern Michigan and across America.

What we cannot do is to rely on more federal spending to try to fix the economic problems our Nation is facing. We have tried that approach with an \$814 billion "stimulus" that failed to generate the 3 million jobs the Administration promised. Instead, this spending spree only served to expand the national debt to a record \$14 trillion.

My first priority, after job creation, is to support efforts to bring this reckless spending under control. That is why I voted to repeal the health care law and voted to cut Congress' own budget. People across Michigan and America have cut back on their household budgets, and I believe the federal government must do the same."

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
4 February 2011

Contact:  
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### **Congressman Benishek On US - Canada Vision For Security and Competiveness** -- Representative Comments On Joint Announcement --

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today made the following statement in regard to President Obama and Canadian Prime Minister Harper's unveiling of the United States and Canada's vision for security and competitiveness:

"I was pleased to hear of President Obama and Prime Minister Harper's shared vision for security and competitiveness for the United States and Canada. As a border state, Michigan has a critical interest in maintaining a strong relationship with Canada.

The proposals, such as improved information sharing, streamlined customs processing, and compatible screening methods for goods and cargo crossing the border, should make business flow easier across our borders, while at the same time, making both Michigan and Canada more secure. I am hoping that enhancing our economic competitiveness with Canada will help spur job creation in Northern Michigan."

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
4 February 2011

Contact:  
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### **Congressman Benishek: “Welcome Mr. President.”**

-- Representative Congratulates President Obama On Upcoming Stop In Marquette --

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today made the following statement in reaction to President Barack Obama’s announced visit to Marquette, Michigan on Thursday, February 10<sup>th</sup>:

“I was pleased to hear from the White House today that President Obama is going to Marquette on February 10<sup>th</sup> to discuss his National Wireless Initiative.

This visit should serve as a great chance for the people of the Upper Peninsula to share their thoughts and concerns with the President. I also hope this visit will allow the President to see firsthand the economic challenges facing Northern Michigan.

Any opportunity there is to focus on job creation in the First District has my interest and support. I know that wherever the President goes he will receive a very warm welcome from my fellow Michiganders.”

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
5 February 2011

Contact:  
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### **Congressman Benishek On President Obama's Stop In Marquette** -- Representative Comments on President's National Broadband Plan --

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today made the following statement in reaction to President Barack Obama's visit to Marquette, Michigan this afternoon:

"I commend President Obama for going to Marquette to announce his National Broadband Initiative and highlight the good work being done at Northern Michigan University. It's great to have the President as an honorary Yooper even for just a day.

As a resident of the Upper Peninsula, I am as interested as anyone in seeing an increase in broadband access for all citizens of the Northern Michigan. At the same time, I have serious reservations about adding another federal program when the national debt already equals over \$44,000 per person. In fact, the President's stimulus plan has already spent \$7 billion on broadband upgrades."

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
15 February 2011

Contact:  
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### **Congressman Benishek Offers Personal Statement on Federal Spending** -- Representative Says Four Principles Will Guide His Votes --

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today made the following statement\* in anticipation of upcoming votes on the federal budget:

“It is my strong belief that the pre-eminent reason a majority of Northern Michigan’s citizens selected me to be their representative in Washington was to do everything possible to rein in out-of-control federal spending. My focus has been to support such efforts while working to ensure that policies coming out of the Nation’s Capital— tax, monetary, and regulatory—serve to encourage private enterprise so Northern Michigan has the chance to experience economic growth.

My first 44 days in office have taught me a great deal about the budget process and the “spending ways of Washington.” Each day we have been in session I have typically had 5-10 meetings with organizations, companies and Washington reps all seeking to keep their programs free of any spending cuts. No one in Washington has asked me to spend less. In fact, it seems in every Washington meeting while there occasionally is a recognition of the doom America faces if the current spending continues, each meeting usually closes with an expected refrain “...yes we need to spend less but not our program.”

By contrast, during my first visit home, just about everyone in the First District asked me to make sure the federal government spends less. In Northern Michigan there seems to be a strong consensus that federal budget red ink can no longer continue at record pace.

Here are my guiding ‘spend less’ principles in this 112<sup>th</sup> Congress:

#### **> Shared Responsibility:**

Before there is any comprehensive entitlement reform effort, every federal department should be prepared to live with less money in 2012 than it received in 2011.

#### **> Sunlight and Transparency:**

All spending decisions should be made in a fully transparent legislative process. No backdoor earmarks, no special interest amendments. If a program has merit its supporters should defend the program in public floor debate.

\*This statement has been submitted in the Congressional record.

#### **> Tighten the Revenue Spigot:**

Simply sending more money to Washington is not going to solve the problem of unchecked spending; every year the US Treasury receives more money; every year the federal government spends more than it takes in. Consequently, increasing taxes is not the answer.

### > **If not now, when?**

I have publicly promised to limit my career in Congress to just three terms. America's future is more important than any one of us in Congress, certainly more important than any political job. I'd rather do what I think is right than simply keep this position. I trust the voters.

In my view, the debt is not a Republican issue or a Democrat issue. It is an American issue. The failure of previous Congresses to act means America now faces a \$14 trillion debt. For every dollar Congress allocates the US Treasury has to borrow up to \$.40 to pay for it. That means indebting ourselves to countries like China and mortgaging our children's future.

Let me be clear, this will not be easy. To stem the tide, many tough decisions will need to be made. Northern Michigan—like the entire country—has a backlog of worthy projects and its people have benefited from admirable public programs. The reductions in H.R. 1 affect every community in the nation. These are hard decisions for Congress to make, and not everyone will be happy with everything that has been proposed. This is understandable, but I believe these reductions are necessary to show that Congress is serious about returning our country to a sustainable financial path.

The Continuing Resolution to be considered in the House Floor this week is just the first step. Fortunately, the President's budget proposal is merely a suggestion that Congress can improve upon. In my view, Congress needs to offer a more fiscally sound budget for FY 2012.

Additionally, it is my view that Congress will need to consider reforming entitlements programs. Social Security and Medicare are important programs that millions of Americans depend on. Without reform, both of these programs face bankruptcy. In my opinion, Congress needs to consider solutions to avoid this crisis that ensures benefits under Social Security and Medicare are not reduced for those Americans currently receiving benefits.

And I think most of my colleagues agree this is not a time to play politics. The inflamed rhetoric and scare attacks on cutting grandma's benefits has no place here. This week's vote will not take away benefits for anyone receiving benefits. Instead, Congress will have completed the first step and as the Constitution dictates, the Senate and the President will have their say."

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
3 March 2011

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**Congressman Benishek: “Remove Needless Paperwork On Businesses”**  
-- Representative Votes To Eliminate Burdensome 1099 Requirements --

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today made the following statement in reaction to the passage of Small Business Paperwork Mandate Elimination Act in the House of Representatives today.

“I was pleased to vote today in favor of H.R. 4, a bill to eliminate needless and costly paperwork on businesses. This requirement was added to help pay for President Obama’s costly health care overhaul and would add a new burdensome government regulation to businesses in Northern Michigan and across the nation which are already struggling in this challenging economic climate.

My primary focus in Congress has been, and will continue to be job creation in Northern Michigan. I believe that in order to put our country back on a road toward economic growth, it is imperative that we eliminate needless government regulations. For small businesses in Northern Michigan, every dollar and every minute not devoted to their trade hurts the bottom line and our local economy.

As the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress continues, I am looking forward to carefully considering additional proposals that work to eliminate government red tape and help grow our economy.”

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
16 March 2011

Contact:  
K. Bonini 202.225.4735  
kyle.bonini@mail.house.gov

### **Representative Comments On Northern Michigan University's Olympic Center**

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

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today released the following statement:

“NMU’s Olympic Center—whose worthy goal is to support students-athletes—is one of those special programs that is difficult to find fault with. But a broken federal budget— where 40 cents out of every dollar spent is borrowed money—makes it is equally difficult to justify such spending as an essential federal expenditure.

In past federal budget submissions neither the Bush nor the Obama Administration has seen fit to support the program. In January a congressional research group recommended ending the scholarship. Moreover, the House Appropriations Committee views the NMU’s program as a special interest earmark. While the safest political course would be to support this popular local initiative, I cannot do so and still honor the greater promise I made to voters to be fiscally conservative with federal tax monies.

In an effort to be helpful, last month I sent a letter to the US Olympic Committee regarding the use the Olympic seal for private fundraising efforts. Given the local support for this program, I am hopeful we can find a way to support these athletes in their Olympic pursuits.”

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
18 March 2011

Contact:  
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kyle.bonini@mail.house.gov

### **Representative Votes Against Short-Term Spending Bill**

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

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today released the following statement:

“Our country is facing a serious financial crisis and has a structural spending deficit with no end in sight. Addressing this crisis requires a very serious approach to reducing spending and forcing the federal government to live within restraints.

We cannot hope to see real job growth in Northern Michigan so long as federal deficits drown out private enterprise.

Those on the other side of the aisle, who suggest that a reduction of \$6 billion is a reasonable compromise, are simply not serious and do not match the President’s stated claim ‘...to make the tough choices that get America’s fiscal house in order.’ Eliminating approximately just 1/7<sup>th</sup> of one percent of the entire federal budget—is anything but draconian.

Some will argue that voting against this short-term spending bill is an endorsement of a government shutdown. I am not in favor of a shutdown, rather I am in favor of—as I believe the majority of those I represent in the First District are— serious and significant reductions to federal spending.

These short-term continuing resolutions, with no end in sight, do not represent a real, substantial solution to reducing the deficit. I did not come to Congress to continue to bankrupt my grandchildren’s future. The time for ignoring the out-of-control federal spending has ended.”

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
14 April 2011

Contact:  
K. Bonini 202.225.4735  
kyle.bonini@mail.house.gov

**Representative Benishek: “These Cuts Are Just The Start”**  
--Statement of Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01)—

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today released the following statement:

“This day marks an historic moment for our country. Congress and the White House have listened to the pleas from the American people and now the rise in federal spending that has defined the last three years is over. The bill that we passed in the House of Representatives, and then passed in the Senate, contains the largest reductions since the end of World War II.

Let me be clear, this bill is by no means perfect. I, like so many other Americans, want more cuts and I believe we will get them. These cuts are just the start.

I believe the words of Winston Churchill—spoken during a different battle—echo true today. He stated, ‘this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.’

It is time to move beyond last year’s business and start doing the work the American people sent us here to do. In the coming weeks, Congress will take up legislation that will reduce federal spending not by billions, but rather by trillions.

And as this House considers addressing the debt ceiling, the Senate and the President need to know—these cuts do not represent the end, they represent our resolve to continue the fight.”

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
1 May 2011

Contact:  
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kyle.bonini@mail.house.gov

### **Representative Comments on the Death of Osama Bin Laden**

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

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today released the following statement:

“I, like all Americans, was very gratified to learn last night that Osama bin Laden—terrorist mastermind of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks—has been brought to justice. I believe on this day all Americans are united in gratitude and pride for the work of our brave men and women in uniform, whose tireless efforts over the last nine years have made this moment possible. This day has reaffirmed the fact that America never runs from our enemies, instead we stare down the adversaries of freedom and defeat them.”

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
5 May 2011

Contact:  
K. Bonini 202.225.4735  
kyle.bonini@mail.house.gov

### **Representative Benishek: “We Need To Drill For More Oil”**

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

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today released the following statement:

“I am confident the bill I voted on today in the House will help increase domestic energy supplies and lower gas prices. The high fuel prices plaguing our county are hurting families and businesses in Northern Michigan.

In a country that is blessed with abundant natural resources, it makes little sense to not fully utilize all that we have. Some of my colleagues have claimed that increasing oil drilling will have no impact on fuel prices. I am by no means an economist, but I know how supply and demand works—if you increase oil supply than the price oil will decrease.

I want as clean of an environment as possible, but a perfect environment will put us back into the Stone Age. I believe people in the First District understand that without making use of our petroleum resources prices will continue to climb higher.

I am hoping now that this bill is passed in the House, the Senate and the White House will also recognize that by increasing our domestic oil production we can help address the four-dollar-per-gallon gas prices that are hurting American families.”

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
17 May 2011

Contact:  
K. Bonini 202.225.4735  
kyle.bonini@mail.house.gov

### **Benishek Supports Hunting Rights On Federal Land** **--Congressman Defends Sportsman Access In Federal Management Plans --**

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today cosponsored H.R. 1444, a bill that would ensure hunting be permitted on federal lands during and consideration of a land management plan.

“In Northern Michigan hunting is more than a sport or hobby—it is a way of life. It’s hard for me to think of something I enjoy more than heading out from my camp in the Ottawa National Forest in late September and doing some bird hunting. My hope is that we can make that possible for future generations of hunters,” said Benishek, an avid outdoorsman and lifelong resident of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula.

Benishek explained that this legislation would require an agency with jurisdiction over federal land, when developing or considering approval of a management plan, to make certain that hunting activities are allowed as a use of such land to the extent that such use is not clearly incompatible with the purposes for which the federal land is managed.

“I believe all taxpayers—hunters and sportsman alike—should have access to these lands and get to enjoy the splendor of Michigan’s outdoors,” Benishek added.

Benishek went on the state that as a member of the House Committee on Natural Resources, he will continue to closely study legislation that he feels will benefit hunters and sportsman in Northern Michigan. The Congressman finished by saying that he will encourage his colleagues in the Michigan Congressional Delegation to consider supporting the legislation.

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
23 May 2011

Contact:  
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kyle.bonini@mail.house.gov

### **Benishek: “All Our Veterans Deserve Proper Care”**

--Congressman Endorses Bill To Protect Veterans In Rural Areas--

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today cosponsored H.R. 1133, the “Helping Our Homeless Vets Act,” which allows the Department of Veterans’ Affairs to contract with private clinics to provide disability services to veterans and makes them eligible for housing vouchers that could pay up to 70% of their rent.

“It is unacceptable that some of America’s veterans are not eligible for housing vouchers simply because they live in a rural area,” said Benishek, a former surgeon at the VA hospital in Iron Mountain.

“It is imperative that military veterans in Northern Michigan receive the utmost care and have access to services available from the federal government. These individuals have given their service to our country and deserve to be treated right,” added Benishek.

A member of the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, Benishek said that under current federal program, veterans can only receive housing vouchers if they receive services from a VA case manager. Because many veterans in rural areas live so far away from a VA facility they are unable to receive these services, they are thus ineligible for the housing vouchers.

Benishek went on to explain that the new legislation would allow the Veterans’ Administration to contract with local private entities that would provide service to homeless vets, qualifying them for the voucher program.

Benishek also said that as a member of the Veterans’ Affairs Committee, he will ask other members of the Michigan Congressional delegation to consider supporting this legislation. Benishek stated that with over 68,000 veterans in the First District, he hopes to continue working with his colleagues in the House to streamline and improve access for important services to our nation’s military veterans.

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
1 June 2011

Contact:  
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### **High School Sophomore From Powers Wins 1<sup>st</sup> District Art Competition**

-- Andy Kleiman Is First District Winner of National Art Contest --

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today announced that Mr. Andy Kleiman has been named the winner of the 2011 Congressional Art Competition in the First Congressional District. Kleiman's "Fast Flight" is a watercolor painting that will be displayed in the U.S. Capitol Complex for the next year. The winning selection was the result of a decision made by a three member panel of art professionals in the District.

"It is truly an honor to have Andy's artwork represent Northern Michigan in Congressional Art Competition and be on display here at the Capitol. Andy should be deservedly proud of his work and it is clear that he has a bright future ahead of him," said Benishek, a surgeon from Iron Mountain.

Kleiman's art teacher, Mrs. Linda Johnson, stated, "When I received the email I made an announcement over the P.A. and then Andy came to my class. When I showed him the email he was speechless."

"I didn't even think I should put it in, but Mrs. Johnson encouraged me and now I'm so glad I did. Our whole school is so excited for me and some of the teachers are going to go to Washington this summer to take pictures," remarked Kleiman, who attends North Central High School in Powers.

Kleiman's painting will be displayed in an exhibit at the Capitol Complex which opens in June. The 30<sup>th</sup> annual Congressional Art Competition is sponsored by The Congressional Institute. Those interested in learning more about the competition can visit the Congressional Institute's website at [www.conginst.org](http://www.conginst.org).

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
5 May 2011

Contact:  
K. Bonini 202.225.4735  
kyle.bonini@mail.house.gov

### **Representative Benishek: “We Need To Drill For More Oil”**

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

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today released the following statement:

“I am confident the bill I voted on today in the House will help increase domestic energy supplies and lower gas prices. The high fuel prices plaguing our county are hurting families and businesses in Northern Michigan.

In a country that is blessed with abundant natural resources, it makes little sense to not fully utilize all that we have. Some of my colleagues have claimed that increasing oil drilling will have no impact on fuel prices. I am by no means an economist, but I know how supply and demand works—if you increase oil supply than the price oil will decrease.

I want as clean of an environment as possible, but a perfect environment will put us back into the Stone Age. I believe people in the First District understand that without making use of our petroleum resources prices will continue to climb higher.

I am hoping now that this bill is passed in the House, the Senate and the White House will also recognize that by increasing our domestic oil production we can help address the four-dollar-per-gallon gas prices that are hurting American families.”

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
21 May 2011

Contact:  
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kyle.bonini@mail.house.gov

### **Representative Defends Essential Air Service For Northern Michigan's Airports**

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

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today released the following statement after voting for a short-term extension of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA):

"I recognize the Essential Air Service (EAS) program is critically important to the economy and livelihood of Northern Michigan. Today's most recent measure from the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee extends the EAS program until June 30th, as negotiations for a long-term FAA reauthorization bill continue. While I believe there is room for reform in the EAS program, I intend to continue supporting this service in the First District. In the coming months, I plan to work with Chairman Mica, and my other colleagues in the House, to ensure that final passage of the FAA reauthorization protects funding for EAS and Northern Michigan's airports."

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
26 May 2011

Contact:  
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### **Benishek Supports Amendment To Remove American Forces From Afghanistan**

Statement of Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01)

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today released the following statement:

“Today I supported an amendment to the Defense Authorization bill that would diminish our nation’s role in the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan. As the parent of a soldier who served in the Afghan conflict, I full heartedly support the work our armed forces are doing to defend America’s freedom abroad.

While I will continue to support our troops, I know Americans have growing reservations about a decade long war that has cost American lives and seems to have no end in sight. Following the death of terror leader Osama bin Laden, I believe Congress, the White House, and the Defense Department should work together to reevaluate our mission in Afghanistan, and responsibly limit the U.S. military presence in the region.”

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For a link to the legislation, click [here](#).

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
3 June 2011

Contact:  
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### **Benishek Supports Bills To End American Involvement In Libya**

Statement of Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01)

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today released the following statement after voting for bills sponsored by Rep. Boehner and Rep. Kucinich:

“After 72 days of involvement, America’s ongoing military action in Libya is a direct contradiction of Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution that gives only Congress the power to make war or use military force. It also violates the War Powers Act, which only allows the President to deploy forces for 60 days before seeking authorization from Congress.

In my judgment voting ‘yes’ on these two resolutions sends a strong signal to the White House that the U.S. military should not serve as the world’s police force and should not be deployed in a conflict without the consent of the American people.

I believe people in Northern Michigan—and the rest of America— have grown tired of being bogged down in wars that appear to have no mission and no end in sight. I plan to continue working with my colleagues—both Democrats and Republicans—to see that we end this military action in an expeditious manner.”

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For a link to the legislation, click here: [H.Res. 292](#) [H.Con. Res 51](#)

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
7 June 2011

Contact:  
K. Bonini 202.225.4735  
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### **Benishek Supports Bill To Reduce Federal Spending By 1% Each Year**

--Congressman Endorses Measure That Would Balance Federal Budget By 2019--

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today announced his support H.R. 1848, the “One Percent Spending Reduction Act of 2011,” which will limit federal spending by one percent per year for the next six years.

“I see this approach as a common sense plan to reducing federal spending. Northern Michigan families have cut back on their spending, and they expect their government to follow suit,” said Benishek, a surgeon and lifelong Upper Peninsula resident.

Benishek went on to explain that the plan would reduce federal spending by 1 percent, only a single penny of every dollar, each year for the next six years. Each portion of the federal budget would simply take a 1 percent budget cut per year. By doing this simple reduction, the government could balance the federal budget in eight years and cut nearly 25% of the overall national debt. Starting in 2018, the legislation would cap overall federal spending at 18% of the nation’s gross domestic product.

“Given our economic crisis, it’s both smart and necessary for the federal government to reduce spending 1% each year for the next six years. The American people have made it clear that the federal government can no longer go on with its borrowing and spending ways,” continued Benishek.

The bill was introduced in the House by Representative Connie Mack of Florida and already has over 20 cosponsors. In addition to its support in Congress, 35 economists from universities and financial institutions across the country have endorsed the plan as a logical move toward federal debt reduction.

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To read the legislation, click [here](#).

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
14 June 2011

Contact:  
K. Bonini 202.225.4735  
kyle.bonini@mail.house.gov

### **Benishek: “Let Americans Choose Their Own Light Bulbs”** --Congressman Supports Bill To Repeal Government Ban Of Light Bulbs--

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today endorsed H.R. 91, the “Better Use Of Light Bulbs Act,” which repeals the federal government’s de facto ban on the incandescent light bulb.

“People in Northern Michigan do not want leaders in Washington telling them what kind of light bulbs they are allowed to buy. It seems like every day Washington politicians think up new ways to exert control over the decisions of American consumers,” said Benishek, a surgeon serving in his first term in Congress.

Incandescent light bulbs are scheduled to be eliminated from American stores over the next two years. This phasing out process was signed into law in 2007 as part of the Energy Independence and Security Act and is intended to force Americans to practice better energy conservation.

“Energy conservation is a noble goal, but in our region florescent bulbs are often impractical. When people in Northern Michigan flip the light switch in their garage in the cold winter months, they don’t want to have to wait for the florescent bulb to turn on. We live in a free market system where consumers should be able to choose whatever light bulbs best suit their needs,” continued Benishek.

Benishek also expressed concern about new expenses associated with eliminating incandescent bulbs. “The alternative light bulbs are considerably more expensive to purchase. In a time when families in the First District are struggling financially, it makes no sense for the federal government to mandate individuals to buy more expensive lighting for their homes and businesses,” Benishek observed.

The bill’s sponsor, Rep. Joe Barton of Texas, in a statement released by his office, noted, “This is about more than just energy consumption, it is about personal freedom...people don’t want congress dictating what light fixtures they can use.” A similar bill, introduced by Senator Michael Enzi of Wyoming, is gaining steam in the U.S. Senate.

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To read the legislation, click [here](#).

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
14 June 2011

Contact:  
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**Congressman Benishek: “Veterans Deserve Exemplary Treatment From JP Morgan Chase”**  
--New Member Of Veterans’ Committee, Benishek Concerned About Past Bank Mishandling --

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today made the following statement in reaction to JP Morgan Chase’s new military and veteran programs:

*“I commend JP Morgan Chase for launching new programs aimed at our military service people and our veterans. As a member of the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, I recently learned of serious gaps in the bank’s basic customer relations with our military servicemembers. Our servicemembers and veterans have served our nation with honor and they deserve exemplary treatment. I hope Chase will carefully track how it serves veteran customers and I hope our Committee will continue to press JP Morgan Chase until it can report with 100% conviction that the bank is doing the right thing in every case.”*

Some of the new Chase programs aimed at veterans and servicemembers include:

**Reduced Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) Pricing**

“Effective 4/1/11, subject to any required approvals, Chase will put in place a rebate or similar program for SCRA-protected military personnel, which will lower eligible borrowers’ effective mortgage interest rate to 4% while on active duty and for a year thereafter. That maximum rate is 2% lower than the 6% rate currently required by SCRA.

**Military Modification Program**

“Beginning 4/1/11, Chase will introduce an enhanced modification program for all members of the military who have served on active duty as far back as 9/11/01. The program will be offered to those who are delinquent or having trouble making their mortgage payments. Subject to the required regulatory and investor approvals, the program will go beyond the government's Home Affordable Modification Program (HAMP) requirements. In addition, in cases when we modify any Chase-owned or Chase-serviced primary residential mortgage, if there is a second mortgage on the same property that is also owned by Chase, we will modify the interest rate on the second to 1%.

### **Home Ownership Assistance**

“Chase will not foreclose on any currently deployed active military personnel. This change goes beyond current SCRA requirements, which protects military borrowers against foreclosure only if they took out their loans prior to going on active duty.

“Chase believes we now have the systems and controls in place to avoid wrongful foreclosure proceedings on any military covered by SCRA. In cases where we have mistakenly foreclosed on military borrowers who should have been covered by SCRA, in addition to rescinding the sale, we will forgive all their remaining mortgage debt. Going forward, if we ever have a wrongful foreclosure sale on an SCRA covered customer, we will forgive all of their remaining mortgage debt, as well.

Chase will donate 1,000 homes to military and veterans over the next five years through our non-profit partners. By the end of 2011, Chase will open five new Chase Homeownership Centers in cities near the following large military bases.

- Ft. Hood (Killeen), Texas
- Naval Station Norfolk (Norfolk), Virginia
- Ft. Bragg/Pope Air Force Base (Fayetteville), North Carolina
- Camp Lejeune (Jacksonville), North Carolina
- Ft. Campbell (Clarksville, TN), Kentucky

“In 2011, Chase will host 10 borrower outreach events near large military bases. Chase will staff all of its Homeownership Centers with employees specifically trained in SCRA, military issues and Chase special military programs.

For more information, call:

Mortgage questions: 877-469-0110

Credit Card questions: 888-520-3863

All other consumer product questions: 800-242-7399

Or visit: [www.chasemilitary.com](http://www.chasemilitary.com)

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
15 June 2011

Contact:  
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### **Benishek Takes Part In “Forestry Field Tour” With Society Of Foresters** --Congressman Eyes Increasing Access to Timber As First Piece of Legislation--

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today conducted a “Forestry Field Tour” with the Society of American Foresters. The tour comes after months of meeting with loggers, timber product companies, and forestry experts regarding timber harvesting and its impact on job creation in the First District.

“Northern Michigan is blessed with abundant natural resources and I believe we need to harvest these resources in a responsible manner to create jobs and stimulate our economy. I found the forestry tour with the Society of American Foresters very informative as I continue to learn more about ways to assist this valuable industry in our region,” said Benishek, a surgeon serving in his first term in Congress.

The forestry tour began in Wells Township in the morning, and then continued through forestry timberlands in the southern Upper Peninsula. The tour concluded with a roundtable discussion in Sagola on issues facing the industry.

Benishek has identified streamlining timber harvesting on federal lands as the goal of his first piece of legislation. He is continuing to examine different ways to increase timber production on federal lands, including accounting reforms and third party certification.

The Iron River native stated, “When I return to Washington, I plan to introduce a simple, common sense bill that will allow the Forest Service to use a ‘pre-decisional’ administration review for the process for timber sales. This is a straightforward reform that cuts red tape and creates jobs in Northern Michigan.”

Benishek finished by stating that he hopes to use his position on the House Committee on Natural Resources to protect loggers in Northern Michigan from overzealous federal regulations that delay timber harvests and slow economic activity.

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
16 June 2011

Contact:  
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### **Benishek Authors Bill To Promote Timber Jobs**

--Proposal Aims to Streamline Bureaucratic Procedures on Federal Forest Land--

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today introduced his first piece of legislation intended to streamline timber sales on federal forest lands.

“By utilizing Northern Michigan’s timber resources in a responsible manner, we can create jobs in the First District. The bill I’m putting forward is a simple, common sense approach that cuts government red tape in the review process for timber sales,” said Benishek, a general surgeon and Iron River native.

Benishek explained that since taking office in January, he has met with loggers, timber product companies, and forestry experts regarding issues facing the industry and ways to increase timber production on federal lands.

“So far I’ve learned that outside environmental groups and federal government bureaucracy have been barriers to timber jobs in our area. The timber sale process is highly complicated and is often slowed by lawsuits,” Benishek continued.

Benishek’s legislation will allow the U.S. Forest Service to use a “pre-decisional” administration review process for timber sales. The Congressman explained that this will require outside groups—such as environmentalists—to submit their objections to the Forest Service before a timber sale plan is determined. By doing this, their concerns can be heard without having the sale process be bogged down endlessly in court.

“Ultimately this is about jobs in the First District, and responsibly using the God-given resources found in Northern Michigan,” Benishek added.

Benishek said that such a “pre-decisional” process is already used for removing hazardous wood prone to forest fires and deceased trees. Benishek’s proposal would simply apply that process to commercial timber sales.

As a Member of the House Committee on Natural Resources, Benishek is confident he will be able to educate his colleagues about the importance of promoting jobs in the timber industry.

According to the U.S. Forest Service, Michigan’s First District is home to three national forests, Ottawa, Hiawatha, and Manistee, which total some 2.3 million acres of woodlands.

To read the legislation, click [here](#)

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
21 June 2011

Contact:  
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### **Benishek Endorses Bill To Stop Tax Hikes On Mobile Phone Users** --Bipartisan Measure Would Put Halts Tax Increases For Five Years--

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today announced his endorsement for H.R. 1002, a bill that prohibits state and local governments from imposing any new, discriminatory taxes on mobile phones or mobile phone services for the next five years.

“I see this bill as a reasonable, bipartisan proposal to limit new tax increases on cell phone users across the country. With people in Northern Michigan already having to stretch their dollar as far as possible, the last thing they want is to be taxed more just for making a phone call,” said Benishek, an Iron River native and freshman Representative.

Benishek explained that the bill would define a “new discriminatory tax” as a tax imposed on mobile services or providers that is not generally imposed on other types of services or property.

“I am always interested in examining a plan that I believe lowers taxes and keeps more money in the hands of hardworking Michiganders,” added Benishek.

The former general surgeon went on to state that the combined federal, state, and local tax rate for wireless service in Michigan is 12.32%—higher than the average rate of 7.4% for general goods and services in the state. In addition to putting a five year hold on new cell service taxes, the proposal also is aimed at modernizing the tax structure for mobile services going forward.

Rep. Zoe Lofgren (CA-16), the bill’s sponsor, in a statement from her office, stated, “This legislation is about stabilizing the wireless and giving consumers the opportunity to choose services based on the merits and not on the changing rate of taxation.”

The bill already has some 223 co-sponsors, including Reps. Kildee, Camp, Rogers, Upton, and Walberg from the Michigan delegation.

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To read the legislation, click [here](#)

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
28 June 2011

Contact:  
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### **Congressman Benishek Signs “Cut, Cap, Balance” Pledge**

--Will Oppose Any Debt Limit Increase Without Significant Spending Reforms --

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today announced he has signed the “Cut, Cap, Balance Pledge” which calls for three needed fiscal reforms before any increase in the federal debt limit.

“I will not support any increase in the federal debt limit unless it is paired with significant cuts in government spending, a cap on federal spending going forward, and the addition of a balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution,” said Benishek, a physician from Michigan’s Upper Peninsula.

The “Pledge” is sponsored by a coalition of fiscally conservative advocacy groups with the goal of reducing federal spending. The three components of the “Cut, Cap, Balance Pledge” are:

- 1. Cut** - Substantial cuts in spending that will reduce the deficit next year and thereafter.
- 2. Cap** - Enforceable spending caps that will put federal spending on a path to a balanced budget.
- 3. Balance** - Congressional passage of a Balanced Budget Amendment to the U.S. Constitution -- but only if it includes both a spending limitation and a super-majority for raising taxes, in addition to balancing revenues and expenses.

Benishek added that the federal debt limit has been raised ten times in the last ten years, including three times under President Obama, and now the Administration is seeking another \$2 trillion dollar increase.

“Voters in Northern Michigan did not send me here to continue pushing our federal government’s fiscal problems down the road. The days of ignoring this situation are over. The time to act is now,” stated Benishek.

Benishek explained that in May he voted against an increase in the federal debt limit as it contained no reductions in federal spending and hopes his colleagues in both the House and Senate will strongly consider adding their name to the “Cut, Cap, Balance Pledge.”

To date, the Pledge has been signed by 20 members of the U.S. House of Representatives.

To see Rep. Benishek’s signed pledge, click [here](#)

To see Rep. Benishek’s video statement on the Pledge, click [here](#)

To learn more about the “Cut, Cap, Balance Pledge” click [here](#)

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
12 July 2011

Contact:  
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### **Congressman Benishek Endorses Bill Strengthening Border Security** --Legislation Will Increase The Use Of Technology For Border Protection--

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today cosponsored the “Border Security Technology Innovation Act” which will increase the use of technology to substantially improve the security of America’s borders.

“Citizens in Northern Michigan and across America expect the federal government to fulfill its constitutional responsibility to protect this nation’s borders. I see this legislation as a way to use innovative, 21<sup>st</sup> Century technology to assist in the effort,” said Benishek, a general surgeon whose Congressional District shares a border with Canada.

Benishek stated the bill includes research into the routine operation of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) for border and maritime security missions, research into tunnel detection technologies, and research to respond to the use of counterfeit documentation for cargo and persons.

“Many of these technologies are already used in our ongoing fight against terrorism and I am confident that they can be successfully employed in the effort to secure our borders,” added Benishek.

Benishek explained the bill also directs the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to conduct a study into the use of biometric technology at the border. Lastly, the legislation also includes provisions to extend a scientific advisory board that expired in 2008, requests input from the Government Accountability Office on long-term research trends in border security, and requires technical projects at DHS to include clear cost and operational requirements.

The legislation was authored by Science, Space, and Technology Committee Chairman Ralph Hall (TX-04).

“Americans are looking for results when it comes to protecting our borders and I applaud Chairman Hall for his work and leadership on this bill,” Benishek observed.

As a member of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Benishek is confident that other members of the House—both Democrats and Republicans—will endorse the legislation.

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To see read the legislation, click [here](#)

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
12 July 2011

Contact:  
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### **Benishek Supports English As The Official Language Of The United States**

-- Signs On To Bill Requiring Official Functions Of America Be Conducted In English --

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today endorsed H.R. 997 the “English Language Unity Act” which establishes English as the official language of the United States.

“I believe this legislation will help ensure that new immigrants better understand the unique American principles enshrined in the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, as well as the laws of the United States,” stated Benishek, a lifelong resident of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula serving in his first term in Congress.

Benishek stated that the bill would require, subject to exceptions and rules of construction, that: (1) official functions of the United States be conducted in English; and (2) all naturalization ceremonies be conducted in English and establishes a uniform English language rule for naturalization and (3) make English language requirements and workplace policies presumptively consistent with the laws of the United States.

“I see this bill as a way to reduce an immigrant’s reliance on the federal government by easing their assimilation into this country economically, socially and politically,” added Benishek.

Benishek explained that as the descendent of Polish immigrants who came to the U.S. in search of a better life, he is acutely aware of the contributions made by immigrants to the United States.

“Many areas of the First District were settled by immigrants hoping to find freedom and prosperity in our country. That is the unique and cherished history of America—a place where anybody from anywhere can live the life they dream. And I believe as long as immigrants enter this nation legally and follow our laws, they should be warmly welcomed,” said Benishek.

The legislation was introduced by Rep. Steve King (IA-05) and currently has 94 cosponsors, including Michigan Representatives Camp, McCotter, Rogers, and Walberg. According to the U.S. Census, approximately 91% of Michigan’s residents speak only English. The same report shows that 25,115 individuals (4%) in Michigan do not speak English at all.

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To see read the legislation, click [here](#)

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
19 July 2011

Contact:  
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### **Representative Benishek To Vote In Favor of Cut, Cap and Balance Act**

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

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today released the following statement:

“The Cut, Cap, and Balance approach is a common sense plan that I believe strengthens America’s fiscal foundation. Northern Michigan citizens—and the rest of America—have been clear they want to see real debt reduction before any increase in federal borrowing.

So far, the president has been unwilling to exactly spell out his plan. He has told the American people he is committed to debt reduction, but has yet to present a serious approach which shrinks the government’s deficits and bends the debt curve downward.

With the Cut, Cap, and Balance Act, the House has outlined a vision for raising the debt limit. Mr. President, where’s your plan?

Ultimately, reaching the debt limit is just a mere symptom of the overall problem—our federal government spends too much. And until the U.S. Treasury stops spending 40% more than it takes in, deficits will continue drowning out private sector job growth.

My hope is that the president and the Senate will be receptive to the Cut, Cap, and Balance approach and agree on a plan that reduces federal spending, doesn’t raise taxes on our job providers, and puts America back on path to job creation.”

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To read Cut, Cap and Balance Act, click [here](#).

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
21 July 2011

Contact:  
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### **Rep. Benishek: “We Need To Protect Social Security Recipients”**

--Endorses Bills To Maintain Social Security Funding If Debt Limit Is Reached—

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today announced his endorsement for two bills, H.R. 2581 and H.R. 219, which will ensure Social Security recipients still receive payments in the event the federal debt limit is reached.

“Our seniors have paid into Social Security all their lives and deserve to receive their benefits no matter what debate is raging here in Congress,” said Benishek.

Benishek stated that both bills are aimed at guaranteeing that checks are still issued for Social Security beneficiaries if there is a lapse in federal appropriations if the federal borrowing limit is not raised.

Benishek explained the bills are in response to the Obama Administration’s assertion that it “cannot guarantee” beneficiaries will receive their checks following the August 2<sup>nd</sup> deadline.

“I am disappointed in the president using seniors’ Social Security checks as scare tactics, which to me is the lowest form of political debate. This is nothing more than 100% political theatrics. Nonetheless, I feel the adoption of these two pieces of legislation would send a clear signal that the House of Representatives stands on the side of senior citizens and will not allow any interruption in their hard-earned benefits,” stated the Iron Mountain surgeon.

H.R. 2581 and H.R. 219 were authored by Rep. Bill Posey (FL-15) and Rep. Ron Paul (TX-14), respectively. Rep. Posey, in a statement released by his office, said, “The president is essentially saying he could take incoming Social Security payroll taxes and spend them elsewhere...the federal government is obligated to make these payments and anything short of doing so should be considered theft.”

According to Bipartisan Policy Center, even after the August 2<sup>nd</sup> deadline, the Treasury Department would continue to receive enough revenue to pay interest on the federal debt and Social Security and Medicare recipients.<sup>1</sup>

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To read the legislation, click [here](#) for H.R. 2581 and [here](#) for H.R. 219.

<sup>1</sup>Study from the Bipartisan Policy Center can be found [here](#).

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
29 July 2011

Contact:  
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### **Benishek Supports House Spending Reduction Plan** --Statement of Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01)--

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today released the following statement:

“The Budget Control Act is an important step toward changing the fiscal direction of this country. While this bill is certainly not perfect and does not contain nearly as many spending reductions as I would like to see, it sends a strong signal to President Obama that the days of Congress handing him a blank check are over.

This legislation both reduces federal spending by nearly \$3 trillion dollars and caps future spending to bend the debt curve downward. It also provides for an up or down vote on a balanced budget amendment—a key reform I have long believed is an essential ingredient in forcing the federal government to live within its means. The bill accomplishes all of this without including the job-killing tax increases sought by the President.

During the entirety of this debate, the President and the Senate have failed to introduce any practical plan of their own and instead have chosen to simply attack the reasonable, common sense plans put forth by the House of Representatives.

Changing Washington is not easy, but this legislation puts in place policies that curb the federal government’s addiction to spending taxpayer money and finally steers this country in the direction of real private sector job creation.”

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To read the Budget Control Act of 2011, click [here](#).

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
1 August 2011

Contact:  
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### **Rep. Benishek: “Deficit Bill Is Not Perfect, But Establishes Real Fiscal Reforms”**

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

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today released the following statement:

“The bill passed by the House this evening is by no means perfect, but it begins changing the way Washington borrows and spends money. There is plenty to dislike in this bill from all sides, but this compromise will put the brakes on America’s exploding debt problem.

This legislation—while not containing the level of spending reductions I would like to see—prevents a national default and begins to move the country’s ship in the right direction. The bill contains dollar-for-dollar spending reductions and contains none of the job-killing tax increases the Administration promoted. Moreover, this measure continues the government’s commitment to Social Security and Medicare beneficiaries.

Northern Michigan citizens are rightfully frustrated with the way Washington spends their money. With passage of this bill, Congress will enact policies that begin to reverse downward the spiraling debt curve. This bill may not be the solution I was hoping to see, but it puts in motion the reforms needed to get this country’s fiscal house in order and encourage job creation.”

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
9 August 2011

Contact:  
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### **Benishek To Host Constituent Forums on Federal Budget**

--Congressman Wants to Hear from Michiganders on National Spending Priorities--

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today announced he would host in August and September a series of 'listening forums' for his constituents to better understand their views on the federal budget.

"The recently passed Budget Control Act was an important step forward but only a first step. The recent S&P downgrade of America's creditworthiness, it's clear America needs to remain committed to a top to bottom review of all federal spending," stated Benishek.

Benishek said the new budget law signed by the President creates a twelve-member Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction, which would be required to provide recommendations (including legislative language) to reduce the deficit, with the goal of doing so by at least \$1.5 trillion. The Committee has to report their findings by Thanksgiving.

Benishek added that, "If this select committee's work does not lead to enactment of a serious spending reduction bill, the Budget Control Act would reduce federal spending by \$1.2 trillion over ten years."

Benishek stated the new Committee should allow the public to witness its elected leaders debating the financial challenges facing America in an open and transparent process that is free from the backroom deals that has defined Congressional negotiations in the past.

"This is the most significant fiscal initiative in decades aimed at putting the federal government on a sound financial foundation. That's why I think it's critically important I hear from those I represent on where they believe reductions in federal programs should be made," Benishek observed.

Benishek said these "public forums would allow citizens throughout the district to come out and express their views on budget and hopefully clarify for citizens what are the real systemic problems in the federal budget."

A list of public forums would be announced in the next week and also listed on the Congressman's official website ([www.Benishek.House.gov](http://www.Benishek.House.gov)).

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
8 September 2011

Contact:  
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### **Benishek Authors Bill To Promote Access To Hunting, Fishing, and Shooting** --New Legislation Defends the Heritage of Sportsmen to Utilize Federal Lands --

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) introduced H.R. 2834, the “Recreational Fishing and Hunting Heritage and Opportunities Act.” This bill would require federal land managers at the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to facilitate use and access for hunting, fishing and recreational shooting activities on federal lands.

“In Northern Michigan, hunting and fishing is more than a sport or hobby—it is a way of life. My hope is that Congress will act to ensure that hunting, fishing and shooting rights are protected on federal lands for years to come,” said Benishek, an avid outdoorsman and lifelong resident of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula.

Benishek explained that this legislation 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. The proposed legislation would limit these threats to sportsmen access by directing federal agencies to exercise their land management discretion to facilitate sportsmen activities, subject to other applicable laws.

“It’s hard for me to think of something I enjoy more than heading out from my camp in the Ottawa National Forest during late September and doing some bird hunting. Our goal with this legislation is to make that possible for future generations of sportsmen,” added Benishek.

The “Recreational Fishing and Hunting Heritage and Opportunities Act” (H.R. 2834) was originally cosponsored by Reps. Dan Boren (OK-02), Mike Kelly (PA-03), and Don Young (AK-AL) and 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.

This bill is the third piece of legislation proposed by the freshman representative from Northern Michigan. In June, Benishek authored H.R. 2209 aimed at streamlining timber sales on federal forests and H.R. 2322 the “Burt Lake Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians Reaffirmation Act.”

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To read H.R. 2834, click [here](#).

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
22 September 2011

Contact:  
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### **Benishek Comments On Congressional Proposals To Reform the Postal System**

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

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today released the following statement:

“I believe that Congress may have limited opportunities to put the post office on a path toward long term sustainability. While it is critical postal workers’ pensions be protected, the Postal Service must be reformed so that it begins to live within its means and does not have to be bailed out by the American taxpayer.

I have reservations regarding both postal reform bills introduced in Congress. I believe any legislation being considered should address both the sustainability of the post office and its retirement obligations. While I do not claim to have all the answers regarding reforming this storied government service, I am open to ideas that will responsibly protect postal employee pensions and guarantee the long-term viability of the U.S. Postal Service.”

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
6 October 2011

Contact:  
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### **Benishek Votes To Curb Regulatory Overreach**

--New Legislation Supports Cement Manufacturers and American Jobs --

WASHINGTON, DC: The House of Representatives passed H.R. 2681, the “Cement Regulatory Relief Act of 2011.” This bill, cosponsored by Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01), would protect jobs and allow the Administrator of the EPA additional time to finalize achievable rules for cement manufacturing facilities, extend compliance deadlines for affected plants by at least five years, and eliminate billions of dollars in regulatory compliance cost.

“There is simply no need to further restrict emissions standards on these companies—doing so will only send American jobs overseas to countries with lower environmental standards. Companies like Lafarge in Alpena are committed to creating a quality product, hiring Michigan citizens, and manufacturing in America,” said Benishek, a lifelong resident of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula.

Benishek stated that Alpena, located on Northern Michigan’s eastern coast, is home to Lafarge North America’s largest cement plant. Since the company purchased this plant in 1987, Lafarge has invested over \$500 million in making this plant environmentally sustainable. The facility, which employs 210 workers, has been certified to meet the most rigorous environmental and process standards in the world, contributes approximately \$40 million in annual economic benefit.<sup>1</sup>

Benishek explained that this legislation was drafted in response to revised performance standards issued under sections 112 and 129 of the Clean Air Act.<sup>2</sup>

“The passage of this bill is important. Northern Michigan can’t afford to lose more jobs to China. This measure is a key step in ensuring over 3,000 manufacturing jobs across America aren’t sent overseas due to regulatory overreach,” added Benishek.

The “Cement Regulatory Relief Act of 2011” (H.R. 2681) was originally introduced by Rep. John Sullivan (OK-01).

To read H.R. 2681, click [here](#).

# # #

<sup>1</sup> LaFarge North America, <http://www.lafarge-na.com/wps/portal/na/en>

<sup>2</sup> U.S. House of Representatives, H.R. 2681, <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c112:H.R.2681:#>

For Immediate Release:  
11 October 2011

Contact:  
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### **Benishek Endorses Bill To Manage Invasive Cormorants**

--Legislation Would Give Michigan Help in Controlling Nuisance Birds--

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today endorsed H.R. 3074, the “Cormorant Management and Natural Resources Protection Act”, which if enacted would delegate to the states the power to manage invasive cormorant populations.

“Northern Michigan citizens know all too well the damaging impact cormorants are having on our region’s precious and unique ecosystem. Earlier in the year, I had the opportunity to visit Beaver Island in Lake Michigan and see firsthand how detrimental cormorants are to our environment,” said Benishek, a first term representative who serves on the House Committee on Natural Resources.

Benishek explained that to remove the birds from private land, permits must be obtained from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services, and often the state Department of Natural Resources. This type of red tape and federal bureaucracy has slowed the ability to efficiently control the growing cormorant populations in America.

“It’s frustrating that government paperwork and red tape is hindering the management of cormorants. With this plague of birds causing damage to Michigan’s natural resources and decimating fish populations, states need to effectively manage this situation in a way that best suits their needs,” added Benishek.

According to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, as of 2009 the state cormorant population stood at nearly 18,000 pairs and the birds have affected areas such as Les Cheneaux Islands, Beaver Archipelago, Bays de Noc, Thunder Bay, Ludington, and several sites in Lake Superior in the Upper Peninsula.

“My hope is this legislation will be a positive step toward giving states like Michigan the needed leeway to better manage this invasive species that threatens our Great Lakes and inland waters,” stated Benishek.

The “Cormorant Management and Natural Resources Protection Act,” (H.R. 3074) was introduced by Rep. John Kline (MN-02). In a statement released by his office, Rep. Kline said “this bipartisan legislation empowers states to better control the overpopulation of cormorants, mitigating their destruction on property and fish populations.”

To read H.R. 3074, click [here](#).

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
11 October 2011

Contact:  
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### **Benishek Comments On Weekend Visit To Afghanistan\***

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

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today released the following statement:

“This past weekend I had the privilege to meet with members of America’s fighting forces in Afghanistan. I believe I speak for all Americans when I state how proud I am of the men and women who have chosen to defend this country’s interests abroad.

I went on this brief tour for the purpose of learning more about the medical techniques being used to treat those who have been maimed on the battlefield.

I remain deeply concerned about the endless nature of this decade long conflict in Afghanistan. I am neither a military expert nor a counterinsurgency specialist, but I feel a responsibility to taxpayers to continue carefully looking at this issue so that I can make informed decisions as this issue is addressed in Congress.”

# # #

*\*U.S. Rep. Benishek, who serves on the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, travelled to Afghanistan as part of a Congressional Delegation (CODEL) on October 6, 2011. Other members of the delegation included, Rep. Phil Roe (TN-01), Rep. Jeff Denham (CA-19), Rep. Scott DesJarlais (TN-04), and Rep. Tim Walz (MN-01).*

*The purpose of the trip was to learn more about healthcare services provided to armed service members from the forward operating bases in Afghanistan. For security purposes the Congressman was asked not make any public announcements of the trip until he returned to the United States.*

*Rep. Benishek landed at Andrews Air Force Base outside of Washington, DC at approximately 5:00 PM on Tuesday, October 11, 2011.*

*Members of the media who are interested in interviewing Rep. Benishek about his visit to Afghanistan should contact Kyle Bonini at (202)-225-4735 or by email at: kyle.bonini@mail.house.gov*

For Immediate Release:  
12 October 2011

Contact:  
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### **Benishek: “It’s Critical The Government Supports Struggling Veterans”** --Representative Praises Outreach Initiative For Homeless Veterans Services—

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today commended the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for their upcoming outreach efforts this month on services available to homeless veterans in America.

“There are several government programs and services aimed at helping this nation’s veterans who are experiencing the scourge of homelessness. I am hopeful this initiative will help raise awareness of the assistance available to these individuals,” said Benishek, a general surgeon who worked at the VA Medical Center in Iron Mountain.

Benishek stated that after touring the Mercy Primary Care Center (MPCC) in Detroit that is used by homeless veterans seeking refuge, he and Rep. Hansen Clarke (MI-13) recently penned a letter to the Secretary of Veterans’ Affairs requesting the VA Department establish a liaison between the Mercy Primary Care Center and the Detroit VA Regional Office to better coordinate services to veterans.

“Some of the people who utilize MPCC’s services are homeless veterans looking for shelter, or access to veterans’ benefits and resources...we would like to request that the Detroit VA Regional Office reach out to MPCC and establish a point of contact that MPCC can call to request help for veterans in need of DVA services,” stated Benishek and Clarke in their joint letter to the VA Secretary Eric Shinseki.

Benishek explained that according to the VA, on any given night, 75,600 veterans in America are homeless and “an estimated 149,635 veterans spent at least a single night in an emergency shelter or transitional housing program over the course of the year.” As part of this outreach initiative, the VA will be highlighting 21 different programs aimed at assisting homeless and at-risk veterans in this country.

The VA has a National Call Center for Homeless Veterans that provides homeless veterans or those at-risk for homelessness with a 24-hour-a-day access to trained responders. To contact the center individuals may call 1-877-424-3838 or visit the VA’s Homeless Veterans website, [www.va.gov/homeless](http://www.va.gov/homeless)

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To see a listing of VA programs for homeless veterans, click [here](#).

To see the letter by Rep. Benishek and Rep. Clarke to the Secretary of the VA, click [here](#).

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
13 October 2011

Contact:  
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### **Benishek: “New Trade Agreements Good News For Northern Michigan”** --Representative Sees Passage of Agreements as Economic Catalyst—

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today praised the U.S. House of Representatives passage of international trade agreements with Colombia, Panama, and South Korea.

“I view these agreements as a key ingredient in helping the job market in Northern Michigan. Once the president signs this bipartisan agreement, job-providers in Northern Michigan and elsewhere in the nation will be able to sell their goods and services to these expanding markets,” said Benishek, an Iron Mountain native who is serving in his first term in Congress. Benishek stated that with the unemployment rate stagnated at 9.1% nationally and above 13% in Michigan’s First District, implementation of these three trade agreements would provide businesses new opportunities to hire additional workers.

According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, over 5,400 jobs in Michigan’s First District are directly supported by international exports. Additionally, the Chamber has stated that some 30,000 small and mid-sized American companies could benefit from increased exports to South Korea, Colombia and Panama.<sup>3</sup>

“When travelling in Michigan’s First District, I have been told by regional business owners that opening these new markets would allow them to expand their businesses. Entrepreneurs in like Oldenburg Group Incorporated in Iron River and Kingsford believe they can hire more workers when these deals are in place,” added Benishek.

“The passage of these trade agreements is great news for exports and should make a significant impact on our business in the Upper Peninsula. We compete all over the world and this will help us win,” stated Dr. Tim Nerenz with Oldenburg Group Incorporated, a global supplier of engineered heavy equipment and architectural lighting products with facilities in Iron River and Kingsford.

The House passed the international trade agreements with Colombia, Panama, and South Korea by votes of 262 to 167, 300 to 129, and 278 to 151, respectively.

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<sup>3</sup> The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, <http://www.tradesupportsjobs.com/state/michigan/Michigan-01>

For Immediate Release:  
19 October 2011

Contact:  
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### **Benishek Seeking Veteran Applicants For Congressional Office** —‘Wounded Warrior’ Would Serve As Fellow on Benishek’s Staff—

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) announced today that his office is seeking applications from military veterans to work in one of his District offices. Benishek’s office is participating in the Wounded Warrior Fellowship Program, which provides veterans employment within the House of Representatives.

“I see this program as a fantastic opportunity to help one of our wounded warriors from Northern Michigan. These individuals have sacrificed to protect our freedom and deserve to be employed,” stated Benishek, who serves on the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

Benishek stated the position will be for a caseworker to work in his Marquette District Office to facilitate and coordinate responses to a wide range of requests received from constituents. District caseworkers also help constituents interact with administrative and government agencies by acting as facilitators, ombudsmen and, in some cases, advocates.

“We first learned about this program while visiting American troops in Afghanistan earlier this month. Knowing that too many of our wounded warriors are unemployed, I felt this would be a great initiative to be part of,” added Benishek, who worked as a general surgeon at the VA Medical Center in Iron Mountain.

To apply to the program, eligible applicants must:

- Have served on active duty since September 11, 2001
- Have a 30% or greater service-connected disability rating and less than 20 years of service
- Submit a copy of their DD214 and a VA letter confirming that they have at least a 30% service-connected disability rating
- Include a current resumé in their application.

Applicants should submit their resume, a DD214 and a letter from the VA indicating that they have a 30% or greater rating to [housewoundedwarriors@mail.house.gov](mailto:housewoundedwarriors@mail.house.gov). Applicants should not send resumes directly to the office of Congressman Benishek.

Interested veterans may contact Justin Stoll at (202) 225-4735 or at [justin.stoll@mail.house.gov](mailto:justin.stoll@mail.house.gov). They may also visit [www.cao.house.gov](http://www.cao.house.gov) to learn more about the program.

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For Immediate Release:  
25 October 2011

Contact:  
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### **Benishek Joins Bipartisan Great Lakes Task Force** —Organization Works To Protect and Defend the Great Lakes—

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today announced he has joined the bipartisan House Great Lakes Task Force (GLTF). The Task Force also includes Reps. Dave Camp, John Dingell, Dale Kildee, Sander Levin, Thaddeus McCotter, Candice Miller, and Fred Upton of the Michigan Congressional Delegation.

“The Great Lakes are the economic and recreational lifeblood of Michigan’s First Congressional District. I am privileged to join my Congressional colleagues on the bipartisan Great Lakes Task Force,” said Benishek, a lifelong resident of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula.

“I am very proud to welcome Congressman Dan Benishek on this bipartisan group of members who are dedicated to protecting our nation’s national treasure, the Great Lakes,” said Rep. Candice Miller, who serves as co-chair of the 26 member organization and was named the 2011 Great Lakes Legislator of the Year. “Congressman Benishek understands the support Great Lakes shipping provides, which is an economic driver to our home state of Michigan and neighboring Great Lakes states, as well as the vital importance of protecting the Lakes and the ecosystems they support. I look forward to joining forces with him on this task force.”

Benishek stated the GLTF is 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. According to the GLTF, the Great Lakes contain one-fifth of the world’s fresh surface water, supply clean drinking water to some 30 million people and directly supported 1.5 million jobs in the United States.<sup>4</sup>

“Growing up in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula, I was fortunate to be able to visit two of the Great Lakes after a short drive on any given day. My hope is that future generations will be able to enjoy the blessings and beauty of these wonders of the natural world like I have,” added Benishek, who serves on the House Committee on Natural Resources.

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.<sup>5</sup>

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To learn more about the Great Lakes Task Force, click [here](#).

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<sup>4</sup> Great Lakes Task Force, [http://www.nemw.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=27&Itemid=14](http://www.nemw.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=27&Itemid=14)

<sup>5</sup> Harvard Institute of Politics, <http://www.ioportal.org/>

For Immediate Release:  
26 October 2011

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### **Benishek Favors Repeal of Tax Hike on Entrepreneurs**

—Congressman Sees Tax Relief As Good News for Michigan Employers—

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today endorsed H.R. 674, a bill that would repeal a 3% tax withholding on certain payments made to private vendors by government entities starting in 2013.

“I see this bipartisan legislation as a common sense reform to lower the tax burden on America’s job providers. With the unemployment rate stagnated at 9.1% nationally, and even higher in Northern Michigan, the repeal of this tax will give entrepreneurs more capital to grow their business and hire additional workers,” stated Benishek, a general surgeon from Iron Mountain.

Benishek stated that a provision included in the Tax Reconciliation Act of 2005 stipulates that when the federal government purchases a product or service from a business, instead of paying that business in full, the government will withhold 3% of the payment owed. This mandate of ‘tax’ withholdings to businesses for goods and services will apply to the federal government, state governments, and local governments with expenditures of \$100 million or more. This tax is scheduled to go into effect on January 1, 2013.

“It all comes down to jobs. Northern Michigan’s economy won’t see real private sector growth so long as the federal government continues imposing new taxes on our job providers,” added Benishek.

Benishek also stated that in addition to affecting transactions between businesses and the government, the 3% tax withholding would also be applied to Medicare payments and farm payments.

“The 3% withholding tax stands in the way of jobs because it threatens to constrict the cash flow of thousands of small businesses that provide goods and services to federal, state, and local government agencies,” stated Rep. Wally Herger (CA-02), who sponsored the legislation.

H.R. 674 has been cosponsored by 269 Members of Congress, including eight other members of the Michigan Delegation. The legislation is also supported by business groups such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, National Association of Manufacturers, and National Federation of Independent Businesses.

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To read H.R. 674, click [here](#).

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
2 November 2011

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### **Benishek Praises Senate Effort To Increase Veterans' Compensation** --Legislation Would Give 3.6 % Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)--

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today expressed his support for the "Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2011," (S.894) which will supply a 3.6% increase in veteran disability compensation, clothing allowance, and dependency and indemnity compensation for surviving spouses and children.

"With the prices of products and services on the rise, this cost of living adjustment is significant for the livelihood of tens of thousands of military veterans and their families living in Northern Michigan," said Benishek, a member of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Benishek, who worked as a general surgeon at the Oscar Johnson VA Medical Center in Iron Mountain, stated the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) would go into effect on December 1, 2011. According to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, the COLA is based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Consumer Price Index and is designed to offset inflation, which has increased due to increased federal spending.

"I see this bipartisan legislation as a way to help Northern Michigan veteran's stretch their buck a little further. Our military veterans have earned these benefits by protecting America's freedom and I believe Congress needs to protect veterans in these difficult economic times," added Benishek.

U.S. Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), Chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, sponsored the bill. Murray said in a statement from her office, "Particularly in this difficult economy, our veterans deserve a boost in their benefits to help make ends meet. This is an important step for our veterans, especially on the heels of news that a COLA will be provided for the first time since 2009."

The "Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2011," (S.894) is scheduled to be voted on in the House of Representatives on Wednesday, October 2, 2011.

According to the Veterans' Affairs Committee it is projected that over 3.9 million veterans and survivors will receive compensation benefits in Fiscal Year 2012.<sup>6</sup> There are more than 68,000 veterans living in Michigan's First District, which accounts for 13.7% of the District's population.<sup>7</sup>

To read S. 894 click [here](#).

# # #

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, <http://veterans.senate.gov/>

<sup>7</sup> The Almanac of American Politics, Michigan's First District, <http://www.nationaljournal.com/almanac/area/mi/01>

For Immediate Release:  
4 November 2011

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### **Benishek Amendment To Protect Historic Lake Michigan Ferry Passes House** --Congressman Sponsors Measure to Protect Vessel From EPA Regulations--

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today joined Congressmen Tom Petri (WI-06) and Bill Huizenga (MI-02) in sponsoring an amendment to the Coast Guard Authorization Bill (H.R. 2838) to block overzealous federal regulations from threatening the *S.S. Badger*, a historic ferry that has been operating on Lake Michigan for over 50 years.

“The *Badger* represents both a part of Michigan maritime history and important economic resource for the state. I certainly want to see the Great Lakes clean and protected, but at the same time I believe it’s essential we defend this historical treasure and the 200 people it employs,” said Benishek.

Benishek stated the amendment keeps in place the current Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) discharge program for historic ships like the *Badger*. Without this amendment, the *Badger’s* regulatory program will expire in December of 2012.

“Shipping and ferries are a part of the Great Lakes heritage. The *S.S. Badger* continues this tradition...transporting travelers, cars, trucks and equipment across Lake Michigan,” stated Benishek on the House Floor on November 4, 2011.

Benishek said the amendment does not exempt the *Badger* from all EPA regulations, but instead allows the agency to continue regulating discharge from the ship at its current levels. The *Badger* is thought to be the last coal powered passenger ship in regular operation in the United States and has been recognized by the National Register of Historic Places by the U.S. Department of the Interior. The National Park Service has called the ship an “exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States” and has nominated the *Badger* as a National Historic Landmark.<sup>8</sup>

The amendment passed the House by a voice vote on November 4, 2011.

To read the amendment, click [here](#).

# # #

<sup>8</sup> National Park Service, <http://www.nps.gov/history/nhl/Fall11Noms/Badger.pdf>

For Immediate Release:  
21 November 2011

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### **Benishek Supports Bills to Reduce Veterans' Claims Backlog**

--House Measures Would Expedite Veterans' Disability Claims Applications --

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today endorsed two bills that would make applying for disability benefits with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) more efficient: H.R. 2053, the "Veterans' Disability Claims Efficiency Act of 2011," and H.R. 3245, the "Efficient Service for Veterans Act."

"Veterans in Michigan's First District must wait an unforgivable time for their disability claims to be decided. Regrettably, many veterans in our region wait over 300 days to start receiving benefits from when they first file with the VA," said Benishek, a member of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

As of November 14, 2011, there were 836,253 claims for disability compensation and pensions awaiting rating decisions nationwide; 61.4% of these claims have exceeded the VA's 125 day strategic goal. The average time to approve a rating has exceeded 180-days for more than a decade.<sup>9</sup>

"Veterans from all eras deserve to receive their benefits in a timely manner. After fighting for our freedoms overseas, our nation's heroes should not have to fight VA bureaucracy once they return home," added Benishek.

The "Veterans' Disability Claims Efficiency of 2011" would create a fast-track system within the VA to quickly grant initial disability ratings to veterans with straightforward claims, giving them access to benefits immediately while the VA develops the rest of their claim. The "Efficient Service for Veterans Act" would give VA Centers access to two principal databases that contain a veteran's DD-214—the most comprehensive record of a veteran's service and the quickest way to determine eligibility for these services. Currently, without this access, VA Centers can wait up to six weeks for a copy of a DD-214 in the event a soldier has lost access to this document.

"With more injured veterans returning home every day it is imperative we improve the efficiency of the benefits process. Those who have served our country and were maimed in the line of duty, should not have their benefits delayed because of the inefficiency of the federal government," added Benishek.

H.R 2053 was introduced by Rep. Timothy Walz (MN-01) and H.R. 3245 was introduced by Rep. Jeff Denham (CA-19). There are more than 68,000 veterans living in Michigan's First District, which accounts for 13.7% of the District's population.<sup>10</sup>

To read H.R. 2053 click [here](#), and to read H.R. 3245 click [here](#).

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<sup>9</sup> U.S. Veterans Benefits Administration, <http://www.vba.va.gov/REPORTS/mmwr/index.asp>

<sup>10</sup> The Almanac of American Politics, Michigan's First District, <http://www.nationaljournal.com/almanac/area/mi/01>

For Immediate Release:  
22 November 2011

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### **Benishek: “Super Committee’s Failure Is Significant Disappointment”**

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

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today released the following statement:

“Like many Americans, I am disappointed with the Joint Committee on Deficit Reduction’s lack of success. I believe Michigan was well represented on the Committee, and I applaud Mr. Camp and Mr. Upton for their efforts. I believe if left solely to them they could find the fix the federal government needs.

While I believe most members negotiated in good faith, it is evident this missed opportunity has given the American people even more reason to be disappointed with Congress. Despite the political rhetoric now being stated, members of my party on the committee reached out and offered \$250 billion in revenue increases, but regrettably that offer was rejected by members of the opposition.

I believe the failure of the Joint Committee is representational of a deeper divide over America’s future. It is the difference between responsible spending cuts and private sector job growth or raising taxes to continue unsustainable levels of federal spending.

America cannot continue down the road of economic malaise and shackling our grandchildren to a future of “Euro Style” debt and instead must chart a new course that responsibly reduces federal spending and grows the economy.

Ultimately, the Northern Michigan citizens and all Americans deserve real action and responsible governance, not political finger-pointing. I want the people I represent to know I will continue to look with seriousness to any proposal—Democrat or Republican—which retools the federal government’s poor spending habits and provides for real private sector job growth.”

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
1 December 2011

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### **Benishek Drafts Bill To Improve Access To Healthcare**

--New Legislation Would Promote and Protect Doctor-Patient Relationship--

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today released draft legislation for the “Healthy Savings Act of 2011,” which is intended to increase healthcare options and preserve the doctor-patient relationship.

“After treating patients in Northern Michigan for nearly thirty years, I believe the most important relationship in healthcare is between the doctor and patient. As a physician, I believe this legislation is a common sense, private market oriented plan to increase access to quality affordable healthcare,” said Benishek, a general surgeon from Iron River.

Benishek explained the new legislation would improve healthcare access by increasing the amount Americans can place in Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) for qualified medical expenditures, as defined by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Under current law, individuals are permitted to place only \$3,100 or \$6,250 per family in 2012 in HSAs. Benishek’s proposal would increase this allowance to \$15,000 per year, or \$30,000 per year for joint returns. This legislation will provide Michigan families more flexibility with their healthcare by providing the same tax benefit for individuals as employers currently enjoy.

Benishek stated that according to the Milliman Medical Index (MMI), which measures the total cost of healthcare for a typical family of four covered by a preferred provider plan, estimated the 2011 to be \$19,393. This figure represents a 7.3% increase from 2010, and a doubling in cost from less than a decade ago, despite the passage of the Affordable Care Act.<sup>11</sup>

“This legislation will work to dissolve some of the federal government barriers and roadblocks that prevent Americans from accessing affordable healthcare. I believe if Congress truly wants to lower healthcare costs and improve access, federal policy needs to focus on free market solutions, not increased bureaucratic control,” added Benishek.

The “Healthy Savings Act of 2011” is supported by Doctor’s 4 Patients Care, an organization of physicians whose goal is to expand patients’ freedom of healthcare choice. In January, Congressman Benishek voted to repeal President Obama’s Healthcare and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010. Additionally, Benishek stated he plans to actively seek the counsel of other physicians, healthcare associations, and industry experts over the coming weeks before introducing the bill in the House of Representatives.

To read the text of the “Healthy Savings Act”, click [here](#).

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<sup>11</sup> Milliman Medical Index 2011, <http://publications.milliman.com/periodicals/mmi/pdfs/milliman-medical-index-2011.pdf>

For Immediate Release:  
4 December 2011

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### **Benishek Supports Bill To Assist Individuals With Disabilities**

--Legislation Grants Families Access To Tax Exempt Accounts for Disability Expenses--

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today endorsed the “Achieving a Better Life Experience Act of 2011” (ABLE Act) (H.R. 3423), a bill intended to amend the IRS tax code to create accounts, similar to education savings accounts, for the care of family members with disabilities.

“I believe disabled individuals and their families in Northern Michigan should be granted the same tax advantages that families currently enjoy for saving for their education or retirement. Constituents in the First District—many whom have family members with disabilities—have asked that Congress support this important legislation,” said Benishek, a general surgeon from Iron River.

Benishek stated the ABLE Act would allow families to place money in tax-exempt “ABLE” accounts for use on expenses for education, a primary residence, transportation, obtaining and maintaining employment, health and wellness, and other personal support expenses.

“This bipartisan legislation will allow for families taking care of those with disabilities to plan accordingly for their expenses,” added Benishek.

Additionally, Benishek stated the measure requires amounts in “ABLE” accounts to be disregarded in determining eligibility for Medicaid and other means-tested federal programs. The bill also suspends the payment of supplemental security income benefits under Title XVI (Supplemental Security Income) of the Social Security Act to an individual during any period in which such individual has excess resources attributable to an ABLE account.

The bill’s author, Rep. Ander Crenshaw (FL-4), in a statement from his office, said, “No longer would individuals with disabilities have to stand aside and watch others use IRS-sanctioned tools to lay the groundwork for a brighter future. They would be able to as well, and that’s an accomplishment we all can be proud of.”

According to data from 2000 U.S. Census, 49.7 million Americans, or nearly 1 in 5, and nearly 18.7% of individuals five years of age and older in Michigan live with some form of disability.<sup>12</sup>

To read the text of the “ABLE Act” (H.R. 3423), click [here](#).

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<sup>12</sup>United States Census Bureau, <http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/c2kbr-17.pdf>

For Immediate Release:  
7 December 2011

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### **Benishek Supports Legislation To Halt Job-Killing Federal Regulations** --House Bill Aimed At Easing Burdensome Rules on Job Providers--

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today announced he will vote in support of the “Regulations From the Executive in Need of Scrutiny Act of 2011 (REINS Act)” (H.R. 10), a bill that would require Congress to vote on and the President to sign off on any new major federal regulations.

“I see economic growth in Northern Michigan being restrained by overzealous federal government regulations. From manufacturing plants, to utilities, to mines, burdensome federal regulations will cost Northern Michiganders their jobs,” said Dr. Benishek, a general surgeon from Iron Mountain.

Benishek stated the REINS Act will seek to improve the regulatory climate in the United States by requiring an up or down vote on any federal rule that has an annual economic impact of \$100 million or more. Currently there are 224 new federal regulations with at least \$100 million in economic impact being considered by the Executive Branch.

Benishek explained the REINS Act will require Congress and the president to make a decision in a timely manner. Under the REINS Act, if Congress and the President do not act within 70 legislative days of the introduction of a new regulation, the regulation will be deemed not approved.

“I see this legislation as a common sense way of giving the American people, through their elected representatives, a say in whether these regulations are necessary or not. Personally, I trust the judgment of the American people before unelected Washington bureaucrats on what regulations are best for this country,” added Benishek.

Benishek noted that according to the Small Business Administration, government regulations are estimated to cost the U.S. economy over \$1.75 trillion per year.<sup>13</sup> Other economic studies have indicated that eliminating a single Washington regulator grows the American economy by \$6.2 million and adds nearly 100 private sector jobs annually.<sup>14</sup>

The REINS Act, authored by Rep. Geoff Davis (KY-04), is scheduled to be voted on in the House of Representatives on December 7, 2011.

To read the text of the “REINS Act” (H.R. 10), click [here](#).

# # #

<sup>13</sup>The U.S. Small Business Administration, *The Impact of Regulatory Costs on Small Firms*, <http://archive.sba.gov/advo/research/rs371tot.pdf>

<sup>14</sup>The Phoenix Center for Advanced Legal and Economic Public Policy Studies, *Regulatory Expenditures, Economic growth, and Jobs: An Empirical Study*, <http://www.phoenix-center.org/PolicyBulletin/PCPB28Final.pdf>

For Immediate Release:  
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**Dr. Benishek: “Will Vote ‘Yes’ on ‘Tax Relief and Job Creation Act’”**  
—Northern Michigan Representative Supports Measure To Prevent Tax Hikes—

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today released the following statement:

“I plan to support the legislation being considered in the House of Representatives today because it makes needed federal government reforms and contains job creating components to bolster private sector hiring.

Though there is plenty for both sides to dislike in this bill, I believe it represents a sensible compromise by extending the current 2% reduction in payroll taxes for 170 million American workers without adding a dime to the national debt and without raising taxes when this country’s economy can least afford it. Additionally, I am pleased the legislation supports the Keystone Pipeline project, a bipartisan job-creating measure that will further improve America’s relationship with Canada.

I believe people in Northern Michigan don’t care which party wins political fights in Washington, but instead simply want to see action from Congress that grows the economy and protects taxpayer dollars. My hope is that the House and Senate can work together to deliver a pro-growth bill to the President’s desk that makes reforms to the federal government and helps improve this nation’s economy.”

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To read the text of the “Middle Class Tax Relief & Job Creation Act” (H.R. 3630), click [here](#).

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
14 December 2011

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### **Benishek Applauds President On Return of American Troops From Iraq**

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

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today released the following statement:

"I applaud President Obama for his remarks at Fort Bragg today marking the end of the war in Iraq. I am confident that our men and women in uniform will come home to a grateful nation.

Over the past decade, our soldiers in Iraq have made incredible sacrifices while serving the cause of freedom and working to build a better world for people they have never even met.

Every poll I've seen indicates a large majority of the American people believe this conflict has run its course, so I believe it is fitting for American involvement in Iraq to come to a close. In welcoming home our troops, I am pleased to join the President in his commitment to improve veteran services for our returning servicemen."

# # #

For Immediate Release:  
15 December 2011

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### **Dr. Benishek: “End of Year Partisan Gamesmanship Hurts America”**

—Freshman Lawmaker Endorses Bill To Prevent Government Shutdown (H.R. 3583)—

WASHINGTON, DC: Congressman Dan Benishek (MI-01) today cosponsored the “Government Shutdown Prevention Act” (H.R. 3583), a bill aimed at preventing federal government shutdowns and reducing federal spending in the event Congress fails to pass a budget.

“The fact that we are facing a government shutdown for the sixth time in 12 months is compelling evidence the Congress I joined in January is dysfunctional. Sadly, Washington partisanship and rancor continues to keep Congress from doing the people’s business,” said Benishek, a freshman representative from Iron River.

The “Government Shutdown Prevention Act” would stipulate that if a budget does not pass the House and Senate prior to the end of a fiscal year, an automatic spending plan would be enacted with an across-the-board 1 percent reduction on all discretionary spending.

“Time and time again, Congress has demonstrated it is unable to fulfill its Constitutional responsibility of managing America’s tax dollars. The sad fact is, Congress has passed spending bills on time only four times in the last 59 years,” added Benishek.

H.R. 3583 would motivate future Congresses to actually pass a budget, by enforcing additional reductions of 1 percent every three months during the fiscal year until a long-term budget is adopted.

“While short term resolutions might be the politically easy thing to do, I believe the American people deserve more from their federal government. I am not a budget expert, but I know, as do people in Northern Michigan, that short term spending bills and continuous threats of shutdowns, is no way to run a government,” said Benishek.

House Budget Chairman, Paul Ryan (WI-01), also praised H.R. 3583, stating, “When Washington can be honest about the true size and scope of our fiscal problems, only then can we engage in a much-needed debate over the nation’s fiscal future and what kind of country we want to hand down to our kids and grandkids.”

Dr. Benishek has represented Michigan’s First Congressional District since being sworn into office on January 5, 2011, 344 days ago. H.R. 3583 currently has 15 cosponsors, including Reps. Paul Ryan (WI-01), Reid Ribble (WI-08) and Jeb Hensarling (TX-05).

To read H.R. 3583, click [here](#).

# # #

### Federal Spending Reductions: If Not Now, When?

By Rep. Dan Benishek M.D. (R-Mich.)

As the debate in Congress about federal spending heats up, all sides can clearly see that our nation is facing a crisis. In short, our country's federal government has an addiction to spending. Poor spending habits—encouraged by both Democrats and Republicans—have been a hallmark of Congress for decades. The end result is a job killing \$14 trillion national debt. While I've only been in Washington for a short time and do not profess to be an expert on the ways of Washington, I do know that if the government has to borrow \$.40 of every dollar it spends it is in serious need of some significant reforms.

People in Northern Michigan already know that we have shackled our own children with a ball-and-chain of debt that they will be forced to pay back. Additionally, I believe each dollar borrowed and spent puts a strain on our already fragile economy. But while we in Northern Michigan understand this, many in Washington still do not seem to recognize the seriousness of this problem. For example, while President Obama was in the Upper Peninsula a few weeks ago, his Administration put the finishing touches on a \$3.7 trillion budget that will result in a record setting \$1.6 trillion deficit.

This disconnect is evident to me every day in Washington. After two months in office, no one who has hiked to the fifth floor of the Cannon Building has asked me to spend less. It seems that every meeting I have starts with the familiar refrain, "...yes we need to spend less, but not on our program." By contrast, just about everyone I meet while I am home asks me to make sure the federal government spends less.

It is my belief that one of the leading reasons a majority of Northern Michigan's citizens selected me to be their representative in Washington was to do everything possible to rein in this out-of-control federal spending. My focus so far has been to support such efforts, while working to ensure that policies coming out of the nation's capital— tax, monetary, and regulatory—serve to encourage private enterprise so Northern Michigan can experience economic growth.

The House of Representatives has already delivered on its promise to cut federal spending. We have already cut Congress' own budget and voted to reduce long-term spending by more than \$2.6 trillion by voting to repeal the Administration's health care law. Recently, we passed a bill to fund the government for the remainder of the fiscal year that includes the largest spending cuts since the Second World War. Budget Chairman Paul Ryan will focus on 2012 when he introduces a budget that will begin to lower the job-destroying deficit and help cultivate private sector job growth.

Many of these spending cuts are not easy to make. Northern Michigan—like the rest of the country—has many worthy projects and people have benefited from admirable federal programs. I believe that we need to make smart, surgical cuts to spending. I will continue to vigorously support some region-wide programs, such as the Essential Air Service subsidy to our airports, which I feel is essential to Northern Michigan's infrastructure and critical to creating private sector job growth in our area.

To those who believe these cuts are too severe, it is important to know that what's on the chopping block from the House of Representatives constitutes approximately 0.0288% or more exactly, just  $\frac{1}{4}$  of one percent of the entire federal budget. While I know that not everyone will be happy with what has been proposed, I believe that people in Northern Michigan did not send me to Washington to make easy decisions.

For far too long Congress has allowed the federal spending spree to continue, but now with a \$14 trillion national debt and an economy still in peril, the age of ignorance has to come to an end. The federal government is handing down to our children a badly maxed-out national credit card from the Bank of China. They should not have to—literally and figuratively—pay for the sins of our federal government's poor spending habits. By making some critical decisions today, Congress can help keep this from happening. It is my hope that future generations will look back on this time and know that the elected leaders in Washington finally did not just do what was politically palatable, but rather did what was right.

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Rep. Dan Benishek is a former general surgeon and is serving in his first term in the U.S. House of Representatives.

### Keeping Our Promise To Seniors

By: Rep. Dan Benishek M.D.

As the debate over the budget in Washington begins to heat up, political professionals are already trying to use these programs as political weapons to frighten our seniors into thinking that they are going to lose their benefits. Don't be fooled by those who use fear tactics in hopes of scoring political points. Such fear mongering is just that and represents the ugliest side of American politics.

While my stance has frequently been misstated, I will continue to keep my word to the people of Northern Michigan. I do not support any reduction, freeze, or change in Social Security or Medicare benefits that are provided to existing retirees or those near retirement. No ifs, ands, or buts. These programs represent a promise made to our seniors by their government and that promise must be kept.

Michigan's First District has more than 175,000 Social Security beneficiaries—more than any other district in the state. This issue is also one that is deeply personal to me. Following my father's death when I was a child, my mother—like so many in Northern Michigan—depended greatly on Social Security for economic survival. And as a surgeon for three decades, I know how crucial Medicare is to providing our seniors with quality affordable healthcare.

It is also imperative that Congress strengthen these programs for the future. The simple fact is the demographics in America are changing and these changes are the primary forces working against the solvency of both Social Security and Medicare. These programs are pay-as-you go systems in which the current workforce pays the benefits of current retirees. This arrangement was successful in 1950 when there were 16.5 workers for every retiree, but it will be impossible to sustain in 2040 when there is only 2.1 workers for every retiree. Simply looking at such numbers, it is clear that the future of these programs looks bleak.

For decades, politicians have run away from the slightest mention of entitlement reform, but many of the newly elected Members of Congress were not elected to shy away from any issue or challenge. I believe those nearing the end of their careers deserve a secure retirement, but so do those who are just entering the workforce.

The House has already laid the groundwork for a plan that will tame the growth of these programs and ensures their long term sustainability. This plan will not impact any person currently in or near retirement, but will strengthen Medicare for those under the age of fifty-five by offering them the same health care options currently enjoyed by members of Congress. At this point, it seems doubtful that President Obama and the Senate will come to the negotiating table and work with us to protect seniors and reform federal entitlements. So far the House has chosen to lead on this issue, and the White House and Senate have chosen to

follow. Reforming these programs will not be easy, but ignoring the problems we face is simply irresponsible.

People in Northern Michigan expect their elected leaders to do more than just bicker and point fingers. Instead, they want those they send to Washington to address the serious problems that threaten to endanger our nation's greatness. Be assured that the House of Representatives is working to protect seniors and make sure that these programs exist into future so that our children and grandchildren can have the blessings of a secure retirement. In the coming months, many will try to scare seniors with claims that are either hyperbole or simply not true. The fact is that Congress has an incentive to do the right thing simply because seniors and those near retirement represent a significant voting bloc. This debate is bigger than both Democrats and Republicans. The work that needs to be done in the coming months will determine what kind of health and retirement security future generations of Americans will inherit.

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Rep. Dan Benishek is a general surgeon and is serving in his first term in the U.S. House of Representatives.

### High Fuel Prices Hurt Michigan Families

By: Rep. Dan Benishek M.D.

As gasoline prices hover above \$4.00 per gallon, it is not surprising that people in Michigan's First District are both frustrated and concerned. There is no doubt that fuel prices this high are hurting families in Northern Michigan. Every dollar families have to put in their gas tank is one that they don't spend at the local grocery store, on a family vacation, or on their children's education. In an economy that is still very weak, higher gas prices are putting a strain on our local businesses that could mean the difference between staying open for business or closing your doors permanently.

With gas prices rising seemingly everyday, Washington politicians have been quick to point the fingers of blame at everyone they can. While this might make interesting newspaper headlines, it does nothing to lower gas prices in America. People in Northern Michigan and the rest of the nation expect their elected leaders to act which is why the House of Representatives has taken up three separate pieces of legislation aimed at increasing America's domestic oil production in the Gulf of Mexico.

America is a land blessed with abundant natural resources, and it makes little sense to not fully utilize all that we have. In contrast, some of my colleagues in Washington have argued that increasing oil drilling will have no impact on fuel prices. While I am neither an energy expert nor an economist, I am confident that we can lower oil prices by increasing the supply in the market. Presently, the United States imports over half of its oil supply from overseas—a fact that I believe a majority of people in Northern Michigan are not pleased with. As long as America is dependent on importing oil from abroad, energy prices will never stabilize here at home.

Though the House has done its part to move forward with increasing domestic production, the Senate and White House have so far been hesitant. Instead of focusing on opening up oil resources, they have been working to increase taxes on oil companies as a way to punish them for the high fuel prices. I fear these policies will actually raise fuel prices for Americans as the oil companies will pass the new tax burdens down to the consumer.

As a member of the Natural Resources Committee, I plan to carefully examine policies that will lead to increased oil production. America has expansive oil reserves. According to the Congressional Research Service, the United States has 972.6 billion barrels (or equivalent) of proven fossil fuel reserves. An additional 351.5 billion barrels are estimated as "undiscovered petroleum and gas." In my opinion, Congress has a responsibility to support the use of these reserves rather than rely on foreign sources.

Congress should not act like it has a magic wand that will fix the problem overnight, but by taking action now we can help bring down the skyrocketing price of energy. People in Northern Michigan have made it clear to me that paying \$100 to fill their gas tank every week is unacceptable and that we in Congress are expected enact policies that will ease the pain at the pump. For decades, lawmakers have pushed this problem down the road until we are now held hostage by foreign sources of energy. To do nothing is no longer an option.

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Rep. Dan Benishek is a general surgeon and is serving in his first term in the U.S. House of Representatives.

### **Forcing The Federal Government To Spend Less Is A National Imperative**

By Rep. Dan Benishek M.D.

As Congressional leaders and the White House continue to negotiate a deal to raise the debt limit another \$2.4 trillion, I have consistently stated that I will not support any increase in the federal debt limit unless it is paired with significant spending reductions, enforceable caps in the amount the government can spend going forward, and the approval of a balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

The debate over the debt limit is a decision that I believe will define this Congress and this generation of leaders. Two distinct choices lie before us. We can choose to continue down the path of borrowing and spending that will surely lead to bankruptcy, or we can choose to make spending reductions now that will put us back on a path toward fiscal sustainability and job creation.

The American people understand the parameters of this debate. Think about it this way: if someone has a credit card with a \$14,000 balance they would not solve the problem by increasing their credit limit. They can't simply print money in their basement either. Instead, they would look at ways to reduce expenditures—sell the extra car, or boat, or skip the family vacation— and so it should be with the federal government. The president wants a new credit card and Congress should not give him one.

The American people understand this. They know that you cannot spend more money than you make. Unfortunately, it seems the president and leaders in his party have failed to get this message. Instead of listening to the American people and reducing our federal spending, President Obama has increased the national debt by \$3.7 trillion—the same amount of debt the United States accumulated from 1776 to 1992.

If the president wants us to pay the bills for his spending spree, he needs to begin cutting up his credit cards. In order to do that, it is imperative that we make serious structural reductions in the amount of taxpayer money the federal government spends. We also need to look at enacting enforceable caps on how much the federal government can spend into the future. Additionally, with the inclusion a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution, we can ensure that America never faces this situation again. Such an amendment is being brought to the House floor next week and it will receive my full hearted support.

These conditions do nothing more than require the federal government to live within its means. I believe citizens in Northern Michigan do not think that is too much to ask. Reducing federal spending is not impossible, it simply requires the leadership and resolve to do it.

The problem we are facing today is generations in the making. Since it was enacted in 1917, Congress has voted to alter the limit almost 100 times. Regrettably, ten of those increases have come in just the last eight years. President Obama himself said in 2006, "Raising America's debt limit is a sign of leadership failure." At that time he voted against a debt ceiling increase of \$800 billion and now wants to raise the current limit by \$2.4 trillion.

Ultimately, the challenge America is facing is an economy that is not growing and a staggering national debt that is rising by the day. I am certainly not an economist, but I am confident in my belief that this out-of-control federal borrowing is a recipe for disaster. There is plenty of blame to go around, but I believe we must chart a new course for the future of this country.

It's time to change direction once and for all, or as President Obama recently said of this ongoing debate, "Enough is enough." As people in Northern Michigan may know, that is one sentiment I agree with.

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### Defending Kingsford Postal Center

By Rep. Dan Benishek M.D.

Due to the sprawling geography of Northern Michigan, residents and businesses are dependent on timely delivery by the U.S. Postal Service (USPS). Because of this, residents of Upper Michigan are deservedly troubled by the implications of a USPS proposal to close the Area Mail Processing (AMP) Center in Kingsford that assures timely delivery of mail for the U.P.

There is no doubt that the USPS is under severe financial distress, with the organization posting a loss of \$20 billion since 2007. These budget constraints have caused the Postal Service to propose whittling down the number of AMPs from 487 to around 200, and possibly merging the Kingsford facility with another AMP in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

While I recognize that the USPS' finances are not in the best of shape, I do not believe closing the Kingsford AMP is the answer to the Postal Service's budget woes. Nor is scaling back delivery to rural regions which deserve the same access to services as more densely populated areas.

Closing the Kingsford AMP and moving the facility to another state means not only a loss of jobs, but a reduction of services. I am also concerned that mail sent from an address in Iron Mountain will not reach its intended destination via overnight shipping anymore if this closure is implemented.

Numerous citizens expressed concerns at a meeting held on October 15, 2011, regarding the possible closure of the Kingsford AMP. Small business owners who depend on sending out products and bills and receive payments are particularly concerned.

My office submitted a request to the USPS Office of the Inspector General to conduct an audit on the Kingsford AMP and Green Bay AMP before a decision on whether or not to close the Kingsford facility is determined.

In the meantime, I encourage the residents of Dickinson County and the U.P. to sign a petition to the U.S. Postmaster General to keep the Kingsford AMP operational. This petition will be available for public signature in my Iron Mountain office located at 500 South Stephenson Avenue in Room 500.

Residents can also mail their concerns to USPS at:  
Manager, Consumer and Industry Contact  
Public Comment  
PO Box 999631

Grand Rapids, MI 49599-9631

Postal service is important to the towns, people, and businesses of the U.P. I sincerely hope that the USPS recognizes that the Kingsford AMP is important to our region in assuring the timely delivery and receipt of mail.

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### The Case For a Balanced Budget Amendment

By: Rep. Dan Benishek M.D.

Recently, the U.S. House of Representatives voted on a bipartisan measure, H.J.Res 2, which if enacted would add a balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution. This bill was supported by 261 Members of the House as it is a simple, effective, and commonsense method of forcing the federal government to live within its means. With the federal government borrowing over 40 cents of every dollar it spends, many in Northern Michigan are concerned their children and grandchildren will be burdened by unending debt and left with a weakened America.

The concept of a balanced budget amendment is not new. Shortly after a balanced budget amendment failed by one vote in the Senate in 1995, then President Bill Clinton stated such a constitutional measure was not necessary to reduce the federal deficit. That was a simple statement over a decade ago when the government actually experienced surpluses, and the prospect of running trillion dollar deficits seemed unimaginable. Regrettably, since those words were spoken, the federal debt has grown by \$9.2 trillion. Today, the national debt has exceeded \$15 trillion—equivalent to more than \$48,000 per individual in America.

There is no doubt the federal government is marred in fiscal trouble and that Congress has been a very poor steward of America's precious taxpayer money. Divorced from a personal connection with the American electorate, too many representatives in Washington—both Democrats and Republicans— have simply spent without restraint. Many politicians seem not to understand the concept that one cannot forever spend more money than one makes and expect to survive.

Ultimately, the debate over controlling the federal government's excessive spending is about the economy. Record federal deficits have paralyzed the job market and are drowning out hope of real private sector economic growth. According to the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO), "the sooner that long term changes to spending and revenues are agreed on, and the sooner they are carried out once the economic weakness ends, the smaller the damage to the economy from growing federal debt."

With unemployment at 9% nationally and over 13% in the First District, I do not believe we can end this economic stagnation without addressing the spending problems that have plagued the federal government for decades. I believe this requires not only a structural change in the way Congress spends money, but a fundamental shift in the way Washington values tax dollars. Revenues come from the sacrifice of America's working citizens. As such, Congress is morally obligated to ensure not one penny is wasted. The first step in ensuring this obligation is met is by mandating that Washington cannot spend money it does not have.

I believe the addition of a balanced budget amendment is long overdue. Congress has been debating this issue for centuries while the federal debt has continued to pile up. I am reminded of the words of Thomas Jefferson—frustrated as many people today—who in 1789 stated, “I wish it were possible to obtain a single amendment to our Constitution. I would be willing to depend on that alone for the reduction of the administration of our government; I mean an additional article taking from the Federal Government the power of borrowing.”

What the past several decades has taught us is that Washington politicians have shown no restraint in spending America’s hard earned tax dollars. Based on the 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. If no action is taken, this country will continue toward a future of “Euro Style” debt and future generations of Americans will undoubtedly suffer from the financial sins of their parents. My hope is that more of my colleagues in the House and Senate will listen to the American people and support a balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

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