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2-14-1991

Newsletter - 1991-02-14

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NEWSLETTER

101-1298

14 February 1991

Washington, DC

OPERATION DESERT STORM ADVISORY. The Department of Defense has announced that in a continuing effort to be of all possible assistance and to provide support to the family members of our troops in the Persian Gulf, services at family centers located at approximately 400 major military installations around the nation have been enhanced to address family needs.

Military families that need information on unit status of service members can use these centers as the first point of inquiry. Other ways in which the centers will be able to help are by offering crisis counseling or information on specialized support groups, along with referrals for financial assistance and support services such as housing, child care, pay allotments, and identification cards. Also, the centers will provide help with stress related problems.

These services are available to immediate families of active duty members, reservists and national guard members who are activated as well as retirees. While the services are available from all centers, the DoD encourages family members to **call the installation where the service member's unit is located.** Families of activated reservists can call on the family center closest to their residence.

The families of our troops in the Gulf share the sacrifices of their loved ones. Providing these services is a way to recognize the sacrifices they too are making in behalf of our nation. It is important to show our wholehearted support and this is just one more example of how we can embrace our troops and their families and show them that we are there for them 100%.

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COMMITTEE -- FIRST SESSION. The House Agriculture Committee met for its organizational meeting for the 102nd Congress on Thursday, February 7. Incidentally, this meeting was the official beginning of my sixth term as Chairman. My long-time and valued colleague, Representative Edward Madigan, R-Ill., was again seated as my ranking minority counterpart -- but only for a very short time. He has been nominated by President Bush to be the next Secretary of Agriculture and he is expected to take that position around the first of March upon the departure of Clayton Yeutter.

One interesting feature of this opening meeting was the seating of the highest number of new members of the Committee in recent history. There are three new Democratic members and five Republicans.

During the upcoming session, we expect to spend a great deal of time in oversight of USDA's implementation of the 1990 farm bill. Food safety issues, including the reauthorization of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act, will be of great importance. Also, it is my intention to vigorously pursue agricultural alternatives to our current dependence upon foreign oil and to look at other income opportunities for farmers such as viticulture. We will also look at how we might assist families of persons in the military who might have need of assistance in the basic nutritional requirements.

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TWO GREAT MEN. This week we celebrate the birthday of our 16th President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln, born on 12 February 1809, as well as the birthday of the first President, George Washington, born on February 22, 1732. These two men are certainly among our nation's most widely recognized Presidents. Both are remembered here in our Capital by impressive monuments -- **The Lincoln Memorial** and **The Washington Monument**.

Both of these sites are truly striking, the latter in its unique design and the former in its majesty. They serve as an expression of American ideals, and as an inspiration to the many visitors who come to Washington, DC. They keep alive the memories of two of our greatest Presidents. If you come to town to visit and plan a tour of the city be certain to make these a part of your agenda. Let me also add as an interesting footnote that George Washington was actually born on 11 February according to the "old style" calendar which was in use until 1752. It was in that year that the Gregorian or "new style" calendar gained popular acceptance.

As befits the nation's first President, the American people have honored George Washington in numerous ways. Besides the many monuments all over the country that testify to his greatness, there are many celebrations that keep his memory alive. Among those is our big **Washington's Birthday Celebration** in Laredo. This year it will be held February 15th through the 24th. I'm looking forward to attending and I hope you are, too!

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JUST SAY NO TO DRUGS. Ever mindful of the impact of narcotics on our society and in particular our youth, I am always working to find ways to meaningfully address this problem. One of the most effective, I feel, is to inform and educate our children about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse. It is also important to set an example and to show a strong commitment in combating this.

Recently I addressed all the 5th grade students of La Joya ISD gathered at the Kika de la Garza Elementary School on this very important topic. I discussed how this disease must not be allowed to destroy so many young lives, how our youngsters must understand the value of positive peer pressure, recognize the dangers of negative peer pressure, and gain confidence in their own decision making skills. I wanted to help these children realize that from their own individual examples others may decide to live chemical free and productive lives.

There is no question that in these times in which we live this is quite a challenge, but as I looked at all these bright, young, innocent faces I felt in my heart that through our unified efforts, through education and through a strong voice it is a challenge which they will meet. I believe their world can be a better one and that it can and must be drug free.

In this vein I also want to say that I have joined with my Texas colleague, Representative Albert Bustamante, to reintroduce a "Just Say No To Drugs" bill which would promote drug awareness during the month of May 1991.

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