



[Update from U.S. Senator John Cornyn](#)

October 6, 2004

In the past month, I've had the opportunity to visit eight Texas cities to meet with constituents and address their needs and concerns first hand. In Austin, I spoke to the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce's national convention regarding immigration reform, including US-VISIT and the recent extension on laser visa limits. I was honored to be recognized by Rio Grande Valley leaders who gathered in Hidalgo where I heard directly from communities impacted by the changes in laser visa rules.

At Laredo Community College South Campus I continued to highlight the importance of education partnerships for increasing good jobs, particularly in the law enforcement field. Making health care more accessible and affordable is among my top priorities, and was the focus of a rural health roundtable I attended in Tyler and during a visit to the VA hospital in Houston. As a member of the Armed Services Committee, I've visited all 17 active-duty military installations in Texas, including a recent trip to the Corpus Christi Army Depot. And this past weekend I was pleased to address the Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas convention in San Antonio and the Panhandle Regional Planning Commission's annual banquet in Amarillo.

Tax Relief: New Legislation Will Help Working Families in Texas

This week President Bush signed the *Working Families Tax Relief Act of 2004*, a bill that extends key parts of the tax relief package that was set to expire next year. Because the Congress and the President acted, a family of four in Texas with an income of \$40,000 will save more than \$900 on their taxes next year. We are on the right track to a full recovery, but we need to stay on the current path as we compete in the global economy. I continue my strong commitment in the Senate to passing pro-growth tax policies, reducing the size and scope of government regulation, lowering health care costs and restraining government spending.

Iraq: The Central Front in the War on Terror

As Iraqi Prime Minister Allawi visited Washington last month and addressed a joint session of Congress, some suggested that the [war in Iraq](#) has been a diversion from the real war on terror. During this political season, some are attempting to decouple Iraq from the global war on terrorism. But such statements fly in the face of the facts: the long litany of terrorist attacks in many different parts of the world, the continued presence of al Qaeda forces and allies in Iraq, and, of course, Prime Minister Allawi's own experience. At this moment, all around the world, military men and women from Texas and across the nation are battling the terrorist threat. I believe such arguments are a disservice to the American people and our forces in the field. We must continue to give our forces all the support they need, whose resolve must remain strong as we fight this great scourge on humanity.

For more information click here:

<http://www.cornyn.senate.gov/record.cfm?id=226752>

Intelligence Reform: Ensuring Our Homeland Security

This week the Senate continues to work to pass important intelligence reform measures. But it's important to note that we have not waited for three years after the terrorist attacks of September 11 to act. The creation of the Department of Homeland Security, passage of the Patriot Act and creation of the Terrorist Threat Integration Center were all key steps to ensuring our safety. I am committed to improving our homeland and hometown security, and I believe that we must be careful and cautious as we pass intelligence reform focused on this goal. The Senate acted quickly in September to fill the important position of [Director of Central Intelligence](#), and I'm confident that Porter Goss will play an important role in the transition of our intelligence gathering community in a time when the terrorist threat against the United States is still very real.

For more information click here:

<http://www.cornyn.senate.gov/record.cfm?id=226583>

First Responders: Keeping Texas Communities Safe

I was pleased to address the [Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas](#) (CLEAT) convention in San Antonio last week. Our first responders are on the frontlines of our hometown security, and organizations like CLEAT represent many of our law enforcement personnel who, along with our firefighters and paramedics, are the ones who respond when we dial 9-1-1. It's absolutely critical that we do everything we can to provide first responders what they need to be successful as they continue to protect us in our homeland and in our hometowns.

On a related note, last month I announced that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has awarded 13 Texas cities with grants totaling \$4,840,610 to better [prepare for mass casualty emergency incidents](#). I applaud the efforts of these communities to prepare and will continue to work with DHS to ensure that they receive all the support they need to do their important work.

For more information click here:

<http://www.cornyn.senate.gov/record.cfm?id=227146>

<http://www.cornyn.senate.gov/record.cfm?id=226948&ref=home>

Come See Me

If you're traveling to Washington for business or pleasure, I would greatly appreciate the chance to say hello while you're here. I have an open house in my office, Hart Senate Office Building, Room 625, from 9:00 to 9:30 AM every Tuesday while Congress is in session, so I can greet and talk with Texans who are here. Please call Denise Pleasant in my office at (202) 224-2934 to let me know you'll be coming.

Best regards,

Senator John Cornyn

More information on these issues is available on my Senate web site, www.cornyn.senate.gov. The site includes a number of press releases and other information that may be of interest to you.