

The Pelosi Report

☆☆☆☆☆
ISSUE 6
DECEMBER 2003



U.S. House of Representatives



Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi

TABLE OF CONTENTS

World AIDS Day
Page 1

National Museum of
African American
History and Culture
Page 1

Medicare
Page 2

Making College More
Affordable
Page 2

CONTACT US!

Office of the Democratic Leader
The Capitol
H204
Washington, DC 20515
ATTN: Outreach Office

Phone: 202-225-0100
Fax: 202-226-0939

E-mail:
Dem_Leader_Pelosi@mail.house.gov
http://democraticleader.house.gov

Dear Friends:

This is the last edition of **The Pelosi Report** for 2003. I hope you have found the bulletins provided over the past several months informative and useful in your discussions with other community leaders. Throughout this year, Democrats have listened to thousands of Americans as they expressed concerns about the economy, jobs, education, healthcare and security. When Congress reconvenes next year, Democrats will continue our efforts to fight against the Republican Majority's assaults on children, working families and seniors and we will continue to propose legislation through the 108th Congress that will improve the lives of all Americans. Have a wonderful and safe Holiday Season!

Sincerely,

Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives



National Museum of African American History and Culture

This month, the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), joined U.S. Rep. John Lewis (D-GA) and Members of the House and Senate to announce passage of the National Museum of African-American History and Culture Act of 2003 by both Houses of Congress.



The National Museum of African American History and Culture will collect, preserve, exhibit, and honor, on a national level, the period of slavery, Reconstruction, the Harlem Renaissance, and other periods associated with African American life, art, history, and culture.
Rep. Lewis (D-GA) and CBC Chairman Cummings (D-MD) take questions during press conference announcing passage of the National Museum of African American History and Culture.



World AIDS Day

Leader Pelosi released the following statement on December 1st, the 15th annual World AIDS Day:

"Today, the 15th annual World AIDS Day, we are reminded again of the urgency of the fight against AIDS. Despite revolutionary, life-extending drugs, HIV/AIDS continues to be a devastating, worldwide pandemic.

"The pace of infection is staggering. According to recent statistics from the World Health Organization, this year has seen more infection and death from HIV/AIDS than ever before. Five million people became infected with HIV worldwide and 3 million died this year alone - that's more than 8,000 people every day.

"New data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), reminds us that we still have considerable work to do at home. The CDC reports that the number of people diagnosed with HIV in 29 states increased by 5.1 percent overall between 1999 and 2002, including a 26-percent increase among Latinos and a 17-percent increase among gay and bisexual men. African Americans continued to be disproportionately affected, representing 54 percent of new diagnoses.

"The Bush Administration's response has been inadequate. It has failed to increase funding for the groundbreaking Ryan White CARE Act, which provides primary care, grants to community-based organizations, and funding for mothers, children, and adolescents living with HIV/AIDS. By also insufficiently funding international AIDS relief, and basing its prevention strategies and research on ideology rather than scientific evidence, the Administration is aggravating an already tragic situation.

"Infectious disease should not be a partisan issue. We can and we must address the HIV/AIDS epidemic aggressively both at home and abroad."

KEY FACTS ABOUT HIV/AIDS

AND THE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

- Of the estimated 16,371 AIDS-related deaths in the United States in 2002, approximately 52 percent were among blacks.
- According to the Centers for Disease Control, in 2002, blacks accounted for 54 percent of all new diagnoses of HIV/AIDS.
- Of the people living with HIV/AIDS, 50 percent are black.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report 2002;14:1-40.

MEDICARE



On November 21st, House Republicans brought their Medicare bill to the House floor. For a record three-hours, Democrats won the vote by a count of 216-218, but Republicans refused to officially end it. The House Republican leaders twisted arms, made back room deals for special interests and changed votes. At approximately 6am on Saturday, November 22nd, the House Republican Leadership ended the vote, passing the bill by a slim margin.

Democrats voted against the the plan to privatize Medicare because it doesn't do enough to control the rising costs of prescription drugs, privatizes Medicare and will result in 2.7 million retirees losing their existing health care coverage.

African Americans and Medicare

Many experts believe that the Republican Medicare reform legislation is likely to negatively impact older blacks, particularly those living at or below the poverty line. According to the Center for Studying Health System Change (HSC), the legislation leaves a significant portion of elderly people who live below the poverty level paying for much of their health care. Blacks 65 and older represent 29.8 percent of those living below the poverty line, compared to 7.3 percent of whites in the same category.



Rep. Conyers (D-MI) and Rep. Jackson-Lee (D-TX) address senior activists groups during a Save Medicare Rally.

According to 2001 data from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, of the 40 million people who currently receive Medicare benefits, 3.8 million are black.

Making College More Affordable

In November, Congressman Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) met with college students from the Washington, DC area to listen their issues and concerns regarding college access and affordability. During the meeting, Rep. Van Hollen pointed out that for many students, the rising cost of tuition is a significant barrier to going to college. Democrats are fighting to strengthen America's educational system and address rising costs.

As the cost of a college education continues to rise, Republicans are shortchanging vital higher educational programs such as Pell Grants, College Work Study, Student Education Opportunities Grants, and Perkins Loans.

House Democrats introduced the "College Affordability and Accountability Act" to help control rising tuition prices and make higher education more affordable. The bill provides incentives for the colleges that guarantee control of tuition prices and low tuition rates.

But is also requires that the colleges implement and report on costs containment strategies as a means to keep tuition prices low. In addition, the Act commissions a national campaign to identify and implement best practices to stop rising tuition. Overall, it offers parents and students access to stable prices.

"We must offer solutions that control the rising price of tuition. We must continue to invest in our higher education system at all levels. And we must make sure that all partners in this system act responsibly to continue to make college affordable and accessible to all students. Our bill does that."

-Congressman George Miller (D-CA), Ranking Democratic Member, Committee on Education and the Workforce.



Rep. Van Hollen discusses higher education issues with Bowie State University student leader.

