

Sent: Tuesday, December 18, 2007 10:13 AM

To: EMAILUPDATE-MI08@LS1.HOUSE.GOV

Subject: Legislative Email Update - Fighting a Tax Increase on 76 ,000 Mid-Michigan Families

I write today to update you on recent legislative activities in the United States Congress. I appreciate the opportunity to contact you.

[Opposing Tax Hikes on Michigan Families](#)

Unless Congress acts immediately, thousands of Michigan families will face another income tax increase on their 2007 returns. Action is urgently needed to avoid a tax increase on more than 76,000 Eighth District families and a delay in refund checks for all Michigan taxpayers.

This dangerous tax hike and refund delay is tied to the Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT) which was originally intended for the very wealthy but now hurts middle income families because it is not indexed for inflation. A correction is needed to ensure the AMT is applied only to the wealthy, but Democrat leaders in Congress continue to ignore this looming problem. Rest assured, I oppose tax increases and continue to advocate for an AMT "fix."

For Michigan families, this is a double whammy as it comes on the heels of Governor Granholm's recent 12 percent state tax hike. The last thing Michigan families need is another tax increase or delayed refunds.

Families depending on tax refunds to help cover winter or spring expenses may find themselves in 'hurry-up-and-wait' mode unless Congressional Democrat leaders get an AMT fix passed into law. Delaying the AMT correction puts the entire refund process in slow motion, and the longer we wait for Congress to get it done, the longer the delay in sending out refunds and the more middle income families are left at risk for the additional tax burden.

Leaving taxpayers in limbo is unacceptable and irresponsible. It's well past time for Democrat leadership to deal with this tax snafu and fix the problem.

To read a *CNN Money* article about this alarming tax increase, please [click here](#).

[Helping Families During the Mortgage Crisis](#)

Homeownership is the foundation of neighborhoods and communities, and I believe homeownership is a crucial pillar of family financial security. Unfortunately, families are losing their homes, where job losses and tax hikes are taking a devastating toll on too many Michigan families.

Recently, President Bush announced an important program to assist families struggling to stay in their homes amidst an escalating credit crunch. The Administration has agreed with lenders, mortgage counselors and investors to move forward with an initiative led by a private sector group, the HOPE NOW Alliance. This new initiative will provide relief to borrowers at risk of losing their homes, allowing them

to refinance existing loans into a new private mortgage; move into a Federal Housing Administration (FHA) Secure loan; or freeze current interest rates for five years.

The Alliance also has sent letters to borrowers falling behind on mortgage payments, seeking to assist in saving the home, and has established a 24-hour toll-free hotline, **1-888-995-HOPE**, to provide mortgage counseling in multiple languages.

Rest assured, I fully support these critical measures. I have also called on Congress to respond to the homeownership and mortgage foreclosure crisis without delay, finalizing laws that modernize and reform federal housing programs to assist homeowners facing loss of their homes. Congress has several bills pending - including modernization of the FHA and reform of such government enterprises as Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae.

This is no time for partisanship, this is a time for action. These and other reforms need to be finished and sent to the President's desk immediately. Owning a home is one of the most important ways families begin building a healthy financial future. It also fosters a sense of ownership in neighborhoods and a sense of pride that can help prevent property decay and local crime.

To read more about the HOPE NOW Alliance, please [click here](#).

Protecting the Great Lakes, Fighting Invasive Species

The phenomenon of invasive species is devastating to the greatest source of freshwater in the world, our Great Lakes. That is why I have supported funding for an electronic barrier to keep Asian carp out of the Great Lakes, and worked to establish marine and freshwater research programs to control and eradicate invasive species.

Recently, the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure began considering legislation which would require the shipping industry to adhere to strict ballast water rules. Since many dangerous invasive species find their way into the Great Lakes from foreign ships, I fully support this legislation.

However, I am concerned that this legislation does not go far enough to protect the Great Lakes. So, I wrote the Transportation Committee asking them to add stronger protections and common-sense procedures to ensure adequate treatment of ballast water and quick installation of new shipping technologies. In my letter, I asked the committee to:

- Instead of waiting, require ships to meet the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) ballast rules while tougher U.S. standards are phased-in
- Name the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as the lead agency in developing standards for new ballast water technology
- Give the U.S. Coast Guard the authority to enforce new shipping standards
- Create a stringent federal standard for ballast water treatment, instead of a patch-work of state regulations

I am hopeful that these proposals will be included in final legislation to improve how our nation treats foreign ballast water, especially in the Great Lakes. It is critical that Congress not delay in protecting our water from the threat of invasive species.

I appreciate your continued interest in the legislative activities of your U.S. Congress. As always, should you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Sincerely,

Mike Rogers
Member of Congress



[Click here to unsubscribe from this list](#)

