



TOM LATHAM - TRUSTED LEADERSHIP FOR IOWA

**Report on the 110th Congress
Accomplishments of
Congressman Tom Latham - Listening**

Paid for by Latham for Congress

Listening

“We may not agree with Congressman Latham on every issue – but we know that whenever we want to talk to him about any issue he makes the time to sit down and personally listen to us.” – Introduction of Congressman Latham at the 2008 Iowa Farmers Union Convention.

Congressman Tom Latham’s Action For Iowa Community

Town Meetings serve as a community forum for Iowans to freely speak their minds. They are an open format which features discussions on the topics being addressed in Congress and those issues important to Iowans and their families.

Known as one of the most accessible members of congress, Congressman Latham has held 472 town meetings with Iowans. The meetings are open to any resident of Iowa’s Fourth Congressional District.

Congressman Latham also hosted the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture for an open town meeting during the new Farm Bill discussions to give Iowans an opportunity to discuss their views and concerns directly with the Secretary.

Congressman Latham's telephone town meetings are a new and innovative approach to compliment the traditional town meetings he holds each year throughout Iowa.

Due to new technology, Congressman Latham is able to conduct listening and discussion sessions with Iowans over the telephone. He is able to talk with you and other Iowan's and listen to your views on current issues all while taking your questions when you are in the comfort of your own home.

Congressman Latham knows that people lead busy lives these days and these telephone meetings are a great resource for Iowans who cannot participate in a traditional meeting due to scheduling conflicts, logistics, or mobility issues, to personally provide him with their comments, views and questions.

When a telephone town meeting is held you will hear a brief introductory message from Congressman Latham when you answer your telephone. A simple push of a button on the phone allows participants to instantly transfer to the live town meeting.

Unlike a simple one-sided conference call, those who opt-in to the town meeting can participate by asking questions and offering comments directly to Congressman Latham.

OPEN DOOR POLICY – Congressman Latham has a strict open door policy for any Iowan who wants to meet with him in Iowa or in Washington. Additionally, new teleconferencing technology between his district offices gives Iowans and groups who might only be able to meet during times when Congress is in session the option of staying at home and talking to the Congressman “face to face”. This is a tool he has also used to implement his Congress in the Classroom program where every school classroom in the district can link to his Washington, DC Office to learn more about the U.S. Congress and pose direct questions to Congressman Latham.

RESPONSIVE – In the 110th Congress, Congressman Latham has responded to over 56,000 constituent letters, emails and phone calls and handled over 2,000 casework requests.

Two examples of constituent contacts to the Congressman’s Office that led to specific legislation are:

Latham authored H.R. 2563, to rename the post office in Marshalltown for Iowa Army National Guard Soldier Scott Nisely. Nisely, who was a Marshalltown resident and a Postal Service employee at the office, was killed in an ambush while serving in Iraq on Sept. 30, 2006. Both the Iowa National Guard and the Marshalltown Post Office had sought help from the Congressional Delegation. Latham was the first to introduce legislation and work with the Democratic leadership to usher it through the House on June 18, 2008. The measure was signed into law on August 9, 2007, (Public Law No: 110-71).

Congressman Latham also authored H.R. 1115 and House Concurrent Resolution 175, allowing caretakers to access death gratuity benefits to care for the children of fallen service members who were single parents. This would correct an unintended consequence of previous law that left such children without access to the death benefits until reaching the age of 18. These measures were prompted from a call the Congressman received from a family of a fallen soldier in the district.

Congressman Latham led the effort in the House to allow service members to set aside all or part of the death gratuity for the care of their children. A similar provision was enacted as section 645 of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY08, on January 28, 2008. Since the provision did not address past deaths, Congressman Latham authored House Concurrent Resolution 175, which was passed in both the House and Senate. The resolution encouraged courts to allow families of fallen service members to access death benefits according to any clear instructions left by the service member, helping at least one Iowa family struggling financially as the result of the legal loophole.