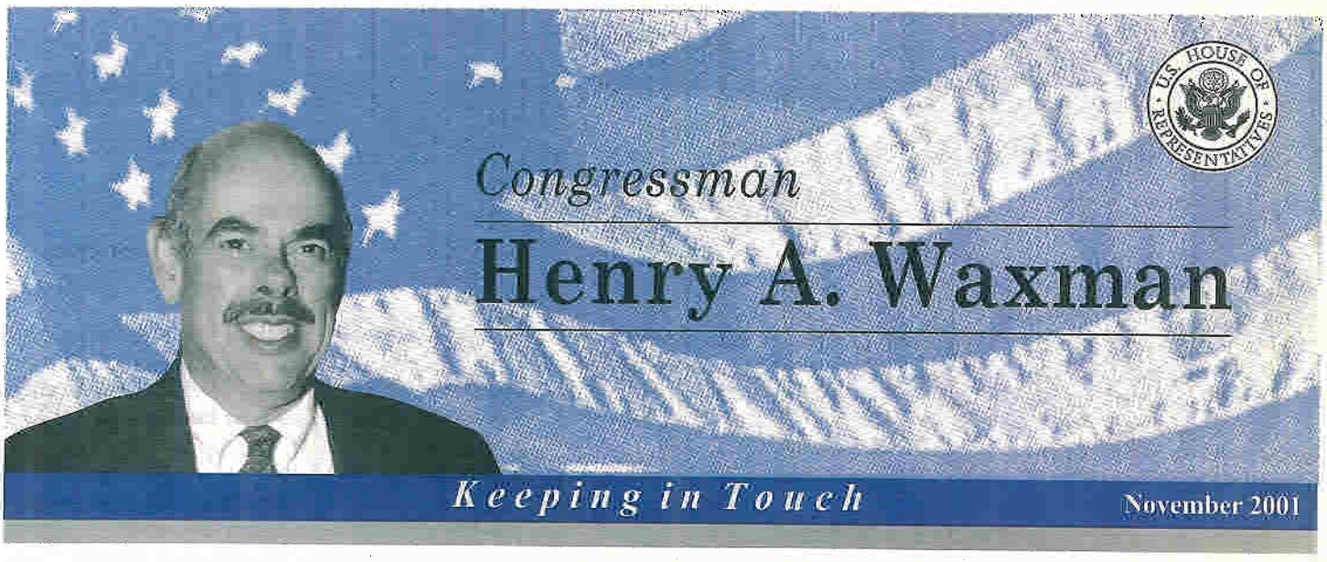

Dear Friends:

As I write this letter, our nation's Capital is adjusting to war.

The new reality we face will mean inconveniences in Washington and around our country. Many will cause slight delays; some may bring intense frustration. But, as with many things in life (and as I remember my parents often telling me), we don't have to like it. We do, however, have to adjust.

More importantly, we have a responsibility to fight and defeat terrorism. That is our obligation to the victims of the September 11 attacks, to our families, and to ourselves.

And we will prevail. But unlike previous wars in our history, the war against terrorism may not be a war of decisive battlefield victories. Instead, our hard-earned victory will be assured by determination, discipline, and thousands of acts of valor—large and small, heroic and routine.

In some ways, the simplest challenge we face is also the most difficult: knowing as much as possible about previously unimagined threats to our safety, and not letting that information paralyze us from going about our daily lives.

Terrorism thrives on panic and overreaction. By being informed, prepared, and rational about threats, we can contribute to this fight against terrorism.

The Public Health

As our recent experience with anthrax has demonstrated, we must prepare ourselves to deal with future health emergencies. It is crucial that we support the efforts of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to develop and stockpile vaccines for smallpox and other diseases we may have to fight in the future.

We should also heed the advice of public health officials who have sent an urgent message to all Americans: Do not misuse or hoard antibiotics.

Anyone exposed to anthrax or other serious health risks should receive immediate treatment from health professionals. Taking antibiotics when you are healthy, however, can create health problems for yourself and your community. Antibiotics like Cipro are not vaccines. They cannot protect you from a future infection of anthrax. Unnecessary use can lead to the growth of new strains of harmful bacteria that are antibiotic-resistant, thereby increasing the risk of serious illness or death. Finally, unnecessarily stockpiling antibiotics could create a shortage that keeps them from those in need.

The Need for Commonsense Policy

Congress also has a responsibility to act wisely during this time of crisis. I was proud that Republicans and Democrats came together in the immediate aftermath of September 11 and stood with President Bush to send one voice to the rest of the world.

We must remain vigilant, however, to prevent anyone from taking advantage of this situation to push measures through Congress that are not in our national interest. No special interest should be put before the national interest, and emergency legislation should only be passed if it meets at least one of the following criteria:

- ★ Enhancement of our security at home.
- ★ Short-term stimulus for our economy.
- ★ Healthcare and unemployment assistance for laid-off workers.

At the same time we increase funding in these areas, we must also protect the Social Security and Medicare surpluses.

I opposed the recent airline bailout package because it did not meet these tests. None of the $15 billion in airline relief was targeted to any of the over 100,000 displaced employees, and federal grants were provided without a demonstration of need. Furthermore, the legislation did not provide for airline security and safety, which delayed our efforts to put in place the systems we need to assure Americans they are protected when they get on a plane.

Even worse, on October 24 the House Republican leadership pushed through legislation (H.R. 3090, their version of the so-called stimulus bill) that would give billions of dollars in tax benefits to special interests. H.R. 3090's gift to oil companies is an instructive example of the bill's unwarranted excess. The *Wall Street Journal* reported on July 30, 2001 that the oil industry had more than $40 billion in cash reserves and was having trouble finding enough sound investments in which to put them all. H.R. 3090 would simply hand the industry another $1 billion with no strings attached.

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United States Support for Israel

The Muslim terrorists at war with us are filled with hate and intolerance. They hate Christians and Jews, democracy and individual liberty, and diversity and freedom of expression. They force their unyielding policies on other Muslims and brutally repress Muslim women and girls.

The terrorists hate us because we are Americans, not because we support Israel. We must not be fooled into believing we can appease Israel's foes by turning our backs on our closest ally and the only democracy in the Middle East. If we are going to defeat terrorists like Osama bin Laden, we cannot embolden them or weaken ourselves with even the appearance of a rift with Israel. We will win by standing shoulder to shoulder with Israel and our other allies who have joined our battle against terrorism.

Heroism and a Lesson We Should Not Forget

This is a sobering time that will test all of us. But, amid the sorrow of September 11, we have found inspiration, hope, and invaluable lessons in the actions of so many brave men and women who instantly met the challenge of the terrorist attacks.

I was particularly struck by the heroism of Rick Rescorla. A former Vietnam platoon leader, Mr. Rescorla was the Vice President of Security for Morgan Stanley Dean Witter & Co. He was responsible for the safety of 2700 Morgan Stanley employees who worked in the World Trade Center's South Tower.

For years before the September 11 attack, Mr. Rescorla preached the "7 P's" to those employees: Proper prior planning and preparations prevent poor performance. He also practiced that axiom, insisting that Morgan Stanley's employees regularly practice emergency evacuations.

The value of those drills was clear on September 11—of Morgan Stanley's 2700 employees, only Rick Rescorla and five others died. He could have escaped too, but on the last of his many returns to the South Tower to help others, the building collapsed. Rick's belief in preparation prevented panic and saved thousands of lives. His actions should not be forgotten, and his lessons in preparedness should be remembered by all.

I hope you won't hesitate to call me or my staff if there is anything we can do to help you. I also hope you will take a moment to visit my web site at www.house.gov/waxman for more information about my work in Congress.

Sincerely,

Henry A. Waxman

HENRY A. WAXMAN
Member of Congress

The federal government's efforts to prepare states and localities for bioterrorist attack began in 1995. Priority was given to large metropolitan areas, and Los Angeles is ahead of the curve in both planning and resources. We have comprehensive plans for medical responses to disasters, including bioterrorist attacks, through the federal Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS), Disaster Medical Assistance Teams (DMAT), and National Medical Response Teams (NMRT).

Additional local and federal information can be obtained at the following web sites:

Metropolitan Medical Response System: ..... www.mmrs.hhs.gov/

Disaster Medical Assistance Teams: www.bigpages.com/dmatca9/

National Medical Response Teams: ..... www.ndms.dhhs.gov/CT Program/NMRTs/nmrts.html

Centers for Disease Control Bioterrorism Site: ..... www.bt.cdc.gov
(has updates of anthrax cases, information on warning signs and diseases)

House of Representatives emergency links: ..... www.house.gov/house.wtcpentagonemergency.html
(includes Red Cross, FBI, news media, and additional sites)

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