



CONGRESSWOMAN TERRI A. SEWELL

ANNUAL REPORT 2017



Congressional leaders present a Gold Medal to Foot Soldier Rev. F. D. Reese of Selma at a ceremony in the Capitol on February 24, 2016

FROM THE DESK OF

CONGRESSWOMAN TERRI A. SEWELL

Dear Friends,

2016 was another productive year in Alabama's 7th Congressional District! We began the year in February 2016 with the Congressional Gold Medal Ceremony in our nation's Capitol honoring the Foot Soldiers who participated in the 1965 Marches from Selma to Montgomery. Likewise, we ended the year with President Obama signing an executive order designating the "Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument" as one of his last actions during his presidency. In between these hallmark events, our office continued to serve you—hosting over 70 district events in 2016, including town hall meetings, forums, workshops and tours; responding to over 9,000 pieces of constituent correspondence; completing over 449 case work files and sponsoring our 5th Annual Job Fair in Birmingham which connected over 2,000 jobseekers and 131 employers.

During our third term, we remained focused on creating better opportunities and providing more resources to the district. In 2016, we helped constituents recover nearly \$2 million in favorable benefits owed to them by the federal government, and we received \$604 million in federal grants for the district, including a \$15 million grant from the Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) for the City of Montgomery to help establish a Neighborhood Enhancement Team to assist with community relations in high-crime areas. We are pleased to present this report summarizing our accomplishments in 2016 and outlining our priorities for 2017.

Our commitment to you remains unwavering. It is a privilege to represent you in Congress.

Sincerely,

Terri Sewell

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“IT’S AN HONOR TO REPRESENT YOU IN CONGRESS!” *-Terri*

I remain committed to ensuring that we provide greater resources and create better opportunities for every part of our district. As a result, last year we continued to advocate, promote, educate, and inspire our communities to reach greater heights in education, employment, healthcare, and civic engagement. In 2016, we hosted over 70 district events including our annual job fair in Birmingham, our annual Guide to Grants Seminar in Tuscaloosa, a Foster Care Listening Tour in Montgomery, a Financial Literacy Forum in Birmingham, healthcare meetings with our rural hospital administrators, and numerous industry site visits with local employers throughout the district.

As we enter 2017, I will continue to work in a bi-partisan way to achieve needed results. I came to Congress, not to be a part of the problem, but to be a part of the solution. I remain committed to that principle as we enter the 115th Congress. We have so much left to do to move this country forward. Now, more than ever, we must work together on behalf of the American people. That is why our office motto, “Constituents First,” represents our commitment to ensuring that we are always ready to assist you and your family throughout the year.

WORKING FOR YOU

SENIORS

- Social Security Benefits
- Medicare Benefits
- Survivor’s Benefits
- Retirement Benefits

VETERANS

- Benefits Assistance
- VA Claims
- Assistance for Returning Service Members
- Pension Assistance

WORKFORCE

- Small Business Assistance
- Federal Grants
- Internal Revenue Service
- Job Training/Unemployment Benefits

FAMILIES

- Capitol & White House Tours
- Passport/Immigration Services
- Student Internships
- Military Academy Nominations

CONGRESSWOMAN TERRI A. SEWELL

CONSTITUENT SERVICES REPORT

- Nearly **2,000** job seekers and **131** employers attended our 5th annual job fair held in Birmingham
- **\$604 million** in federal grants awarded to the 7th Congressional District in 2016
- Approximately **\$2 million** in favorable benefits awarded to constituents assisted by our office
- **7** cabinet secretaries / undersecretaries / directors from the Obama administration visited the district in 2016
- Opened **453** new constituent cases and closed **449** constituent cases involving federal issues
- Approximately **9,000** letter and email replies sent to constituents in 2016
- **22,075** subscribers to our weekly “Guide to Grants” and our monthly newsletters
- **2** bills passed; **220** bills sponsor/co-sponsored; and **584** votes on the House floor
- **30** Congressional interns in our district and D.C. offices learning how our government operates
- Over **70** district events in 2016, including town hall meetings, forums, workshops, funding announcements, and industry tours
- **22** Federal Agencies attended our Annual Grants Seminar in Tuscaloosa, AL
- **72** students participated in the 7th Congressional District Art Competition
- **9** Military Service Academy nominations were submitted from the 7th Congressional District in 2016: **3** to West Point, **3** to the Naval Academy, and **3** to the Air Force Academy, which would result in **\$3.6 million** in academic assistance to students from our district
- Hosted **11** Members of Congress in Birmingham for a Congressional Field Hearing on voting rights
- **3** Directors of National Intelligence Agencies (CIA, ODNI & DIA) visited the Center of Academic Excellence in Intelligence at Miles College to promote diversity

C O N G R E S S W O M A N T E R R I A . S E W E L L

SPEAKING UP FOR ALL ALABAMIANS

PRESERVING OUR CIVIL RIGHTS HISTORY: BIRMINGHAM DESIGNATED AS A CIVIL RIGHTS NATIONAL MONUMENT

With the designation of its historic sites as a National Monument, Birmingham takes its rightful place as the epicenter of the fight for Civil Rights in America. I was proud to introduce the bi-partisan legislation in March 2016 that made the legislative case for incorporating Birmingham's historic Civil Rights sites into the National Park Service System. It is such a great tribute to the people of the city of Birmingham that President Obama would make this designation as one of his last actions before leaving the White House.

From the special role that the A.G. Gaston Hotel played in hosting the leaders of the movement, to the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church that killed four little girls, the legacy of the events that occurred in Birmingham has earned our city a special place in American history. This National Monument designation means that historic preservation efforts will be enhanced for key Civil Rights sites, greater economic revitalization will occur, and it will forever cement the pivotal role Birmingham played in the Civil Rights Movement. We all rejoice in this shared victory!



Congresswoman Sewell and Birmingham Mayor William Bell host U.S. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell and National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis for a public hearing on creating a Civil Rights National Monument in Birmingham

LEADING THE FIGHT TO RESTORE THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT: SPONSOR OF THE VOTING RIGHTS ADVANCEMENT ACT

Our office has been at the forefront of the modern-day fight against voter suppression. Voting rights are as relevant today as they were 52 years ago with state voter ID laws being challenged across the country. These laws result in voter suppression that specifically target certain minority groups. I am proud to be the lead sponsor of the Voting Rights Advancement Act—that is the primary legislation supported by national civil rights advocates and 187 Members of Congress.

The Congressional Voting Rights Caucus was launched in 2016, and I currently serve as Vice-Chair of the VR Caucus. In March 2016, we hosted the first of a national series of Congressional Forums on the State of Voting Rights in America in Birmingham. Now more than ever, it is imperative that Congress act to protect the voting rights of all Americans. Silencing even one voice hurts our democracy. Congress must RESTORE THE VOTE!

MATCHING JOB SEEKERS WITH QUALITY EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES: 2016 ANNUAL CONGRESSIONAL JOB FAIR

I believe my office must play a vital role in addressing the unemployment crisis that plagues our district. Building on the success of our past efforts, our office continued to host Project Ready workshops and to promote public and private partnerships to provide skills training to our constituents.

On August 8, 2016, the 5th Annual Job Fair returned to Birmingham, where we welcomed nearly 2,000 job seekers and 131 employers across all industry sectors, including federal, state, and local agencies. We are excited to continue our programming in 2017, and are committed to expanding opportunities, including access to quality jobs for our constituents.



Meeting with Hyundai Manufacturing at the 2016 Congressional Job Fair, where Congresswoman Sewell made job growth a top legislative priority

C O N G R E S S W O M A N T E R R I A . S E W E L L

SPEAKING UP FOR ALL ALABAMIANS

FIGHTING FOR THE RIGHTS OF OUR SENIORS: PROTECT MEDICARE AND SOCIAL SECURITY

In 2016, I worked across the aisle to safeguard economic security and access to quality, affordable health coverage for all Alabamians, especially our seniors. We successfully blocked efforts to decrease Medicare Part B reimbursements to physicians and stopped the increase of Medicare premiums for seniors. I also joined efforts to ensure seniors can go to the pharmacy of their choice and worked to protect access to affordable medications through Medicare Part D. In addition, I introduced and co-sponsored bills to increase medical professionals in rural areas, protect rural hospitals, and expand Medicare coverage to include dental care and hearing aids. As a strong supporter of the Affordable Care Act, I'm proud to see the real life impact that changes like closing the Medicare prescription drug "donut hole" have had for Alabama residents. According to a report by the Department of Health & Human Services (HHS), that change has saved \$97 million for 90,556 Alabama seniors, an average of \$1,075 per beneficiary. HHS also reports that 531,567 Alabama seniors have received free preventive care services because of ACA provisions requiring coverage of annual wellness visits.

Social Security is the foundation of our retirement system and is the main source of income for the vast majority of our aging constituency. This is why strengthening the solvency of the Social Security trust fund will continue to be a top priority in the future so that seniors and the disabled can have access to those benefits. Medicare and Social Security are promises we must keep to our seniors and their families. I will continue to oppose efforts to roll back the economic and health protections afforded to our seniors or any attempt at privatization of these systems.



Coalition for Medicare Choice recognizes Congresswoman Sewell for legislative work protecting Medicare Advantage

PROTECTING MILITARY ASSETS & DIVERSIFYING THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY: MISSION READINESS IS THE KEY TO OUR CONTINUED SUCCESS

We have a tremendous sense of pride for the two military units in our district—the 187th Air National Guard Fighter Wing in Montgomery and the 117th Air Refueling Wing in Birmingham. These two units are vital to our nation's combat missions in protecting our military assets, maintaining air-superiority, and providing effective air-cover for our men and women deployed in combat zones around the globe. Both units have proven combat track records and unparalleled military legacies of service, and I will continue to be a strong advocate for maintaining and expanding the resources for both units. Currently, the 187th guard unit is among the five final candidates the Air Force is considering to fly the new F-35A Lightning II fighter jets, known as the Joint Strike Fighter. If chosen, the 187th would be the only air national guard unit with this unique air capabilities.

Our national security is also dependent on a strong, capable and diverse workforce. As a Member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, I have made increasing diversity in the intelligence community a priority of my work on the committee. We have established internships through Centers for Academic Excellence in Intelligence that are housed in colleges and universities throughout the nation, including our very own Miles College in Birmingham. Today, more than ever, our nation's security hinges on having a well-equipped military and a workforce that draws on all talented Americans in order to ensure our success.



Congresswoman Sewell discusses military assets and appropriations with the 187th Air National Guard Fighter Wing Commander, Colonel Randal Efferson (right), and Colonel Cliff James, Commander of the 117th Air Refueling Wing (left)

CONGRESSWOMAN TERRI A. SEWELL

2017 PRIORITIES

■ CREATING JOBS AND PROMOTING SKILLS TRAINING

- Host our 6th Annual Job Fair in 2017 to provide quality employment opportunities for constituents
- Expand Project R.E.A.D.Y. workshops to assist constituents in preparing for the 21st century workforce
- Promote greater grant opportunities in the district by enhancing our weekly “Guide to Grant” reports
- Fight to save and expand jobs in the district by supporting legislation to increase funding for infrastructure, education, military defense, and healthcare reform

■ PROTECTING IMPORTANT GAINS MADE OVER THE LAST EIGHT YEARS

- Fight to preserve and fix the Affordable Care Act
- Push back against efforts to weaken or privatize Social Security and Medicare
- Fight against efforts to block grant Medicaid to the states
- Continue to support equal pay for equal work
- Defend against efforts to rollback important consumer protections

■ PRESERVING OUR HISTORY AND PROTECTING THE RIGHT TO VOTE

- Build bi-partisan support for the Voting Rights Advancement Act that would restore the VRA
- Increase Federal Funding to restore, preserve and promote the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Sites throughout the district
- Support our veterans and efforts to streamline the delivery of their healthcare services
- Support and promote the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument