

# Michael E. Capuano

CONGRESSMAN

8th Congressional District, Massachusetts



Serving Cambridge, Chelsea, Somerville and most of Boston.



Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-2108

MICHAEL E. CAPUANO  
8TH DISTRICT, MASSACHUSETTS

Dear Friends,

It was a busy year and there is much to report. Our troops remain in Afghanistan, working to bring stability to the country. On May 1, 2003 President Bush declared that major combat in Iraq was over. And yet, American lives are being lost there with alarming regularity. Our men and women in uniform are still stationed in Iraq, fighting to survive thousands of miles from home, in dangerous conditions, with no idea when they might see their families. Regardless of how one may feel about the war, we are all united in our support for those on the front lines who face danger every day.

As many of you know, I did not support the President's march toward war in Iraq and voted against the October 2002 Congressional resolution authorizing the use of force. With each passing day, I become more convinced that I made the right decision.

Congress recently passed the President's \$87 billion funding request for Iraq and Afghanistan. I could not support this request because we have absolutely no idea how long troops will be stationed in Iraq and Afghanistan, and we have no idea how much money will be required to complete this mission. Like most Americans, I certainly realized that our commitment overseas would be lengthy and costly. However, the Administration has thus far been unwilling or unable to articulate an exit strategy.

It is understandable that the President cannot set out a precise timetable for troop withdrawal and he cannot provide a guaranteed final budget figure. To expect this level of detail is unrealistic. However, I do expect, and more importantly, my constituents expect, basic information about the future of this mission. That information is just not being shared.

Despite the fact that I did not support the President's actions in Iraq, let me be very clear that I do not believe the United States should walk away. In fact, I have supported funding requests for Iraq in the past despite my opposition to the President's actions. We are there and we now have an obligation to help that country rebuild. I would support such a request again, if it were accompanied by sufficient information about overall cost and plans for withdrawal.

No doubt there will be renewed debate about the future of Iraq, Afghanistan, and other hot spots in the war on terror, as well as additional requests for funding in the coming months. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about these issues, or would like to share your opinion. It is my honor and privilege to represent you in Congress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike".

# Medicare

In late November, the House passed the Medicare prescription drug plan. The Senate has also passed this bill. I voted against the Medicare prescription drug plan because I feel very strongly that it takes steps to dismantle a plan program that older Americans have relied on for 38 years.

This bill fails to offer the types of guarantees that our seniors need and deserve. It has no defined benefit and no standard premium. Additionally, it does nothing to address the rapidly rising cost of prescription drugs.



There are some positive provisions in the Medicare prescription drug bill. For example, this bill does direct some funding to hospitals, doctors and other health care professionals. However, I remain deeply concerned that this bill will help only a very small percentage of our seniors and could eventually do away with the Medicare program entirely. This bill represents a lost opportunity to provide our seniors with a real benefit. Instead it will force many to pursue short-term solutions such as re-importing drugs from Canada.

*Congressman Capuano talking with residents at the Ralph and Jenny Senior Center in Somerville about the Medicare prescription drug bill.*

# Financial Services

There have been considerable changes in Boston's financial services industry this year. Two of our largest financial institutions were sold to companies headquartered outside of Massachusetts - FleetBoston was sold to Bank of America and John Hancock was sold to Manulife. In addition, the mutual fund industry has been embroiled in scandals that threaten the investments and retirement security of millions of American families.

I can assure you that I will be following these developments closely in the coming months. I will be working with the other members of the state Congressional delegation and state and local leaders to ensure that these mergers do not hurt the many charitable organizations, community development initiatives, and affordable housing groups who rely on funding from

these institutions. We must also do all we can to preserve a competitive banking marketplace for consumers throughout Massachusetts.

As a member of the House Financial Services Committee, I am also involved in efforts to reform the mutual fund industry. It seems that some people in the business have abused the trust of investors - they will be punished and the confidence in the industry will be restored. Legislation recently passed the House to improve disclosures, bring more independence to mutual fund boards, and increase the penalties for late trading. I am confident that we can fix the problems that have been uncovered, restore investor confidence in mutual funds, and maintain Massachusetts' leadership position in this important sector.

# Transportation

As a member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, I have been working over the past year to reauthorize the “Transportation Equity Act of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”. Unlike tax cuts for the wealthiest 1% of us, this legislation is a true economic stimulus bill. The Department of Transportation’s own studies show that for every \$1 billion the federal government invests in highway infrastructure, 47,500 jobs are created and over \$6.2 billion in economic activity is generated.

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee is proposing to spend \$375 billion over six years to improve road conditions, expand transit systems and fund transportation enhancements such as bike paths. Republicans and Democrats on the Committee are united behind this funding because the need to improve our transportation infrastructure is critical. Unfortunately, we are battling a President who wants to spend much less on our nation’s transportation needs. At this time, the President is only willing to invest \$247 billion.

The House bill was introduced recently and it would provide Massachusetts with over \$6 billion in highway and transit funding over the next 6 years. This is an increase of \$2 billion over the previous authorization. This bill will bring tangible benefits to the 8<sup>th</sup> District and I am working to insure that a number of

important local projects are included in this legislation, ranging from the Urban Ring and the Silver Line, to bridge reconstruction efforts and highway improvements. Because of the tremendous bipartisan support that the higher funding figure has on the Committee, I am hopeful that we will convince the President to increase his commitment to our nation’s transportation infrastructure.



*Congressman Capuano speaks out in support of increasing affordable housing stock at a groundbreaking ceremony in Egleston Square. Photo by Bruno Debas.*

# Housing

Creating affordable housing opportunities is an annual battle in the Congress. There is just not enough support for such programs and not enough members who believe that the federal government must take a more active role. Despite these difficulties, we have managed to make some small progress. This fall, the House passed the “American Dream Downpayment Act” which will provide homeownership assistance to eligible families. The Senate is expected to pass similar legislation soon.

Several provisions from legislation I authored to assist grandparents raising their grandchildren were included in the Senate version of the bill. Since I took office, I have worked to make life a little easier for these unique families by filing The LEGACY Act, legislation that would help duplicate the success of the Grandfamilies House in Dorchester. This facility is the only housing development in the country specifi-

cally designed to meet the needs of both children and seniors, with design features such as childproof cabinets and handicapped accessible bathrooms.

It is estimated that more than 2 million children across the nation are being raised by their grandparents or other relatives. Many of these children have parents who have died, are in prison, or are struggling with drug or alcohol addictions, while others have been taken out of abusive homes. The Senate bill contains provisions from the LEGACY Act that will help other communities develop housing for these families while educating housing officials about the issues facing these “Grandfamilies”.

This important housing bill has wide support on both sides of the aisle, and I am hopeful that it will move quickly through the Senate and be available for the President’s signature.

Congress of the United States  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

  
M.C.

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

**District Offices**

110 First Street  
Cambridge, MA 02141  
Phone: (617) 621-6208  
Fax: (617) 621-8628

Roxbury Community College  
Administration Building, Room 110  
Phone: (617) 621-6208  
Fax: (617) 541-6909

**Washington Office**

1232 Longworth Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
Phone: (202) 225-5111  
Fax: (202) 225-9322

**Website and E-mail**

[www.house.gov/capuano](http://www.house.gov/capuano)

**POSTAL PATRON – LOCAL**  
8th Congressional District  
Massachusetts

 This mailing was prepared, published and mailed at taxpayer expense.

## Congressman Mike Capuano Invites You to Join Him at a Community Meeting

There are a series of community meetings scheduled during the month of January. Since taking office in 1999, there have been similar meetings throughout the 8<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. They are excellent opportunities to hear directly about the issues that most concern you. Please join me at one of the following locations:

**Hyde Park Library, Hyde Park** from 10:00 – 11:30 AM on Saturday January 10<sup>th</sup>  
**VA Medical Center, Jamaica Plain** from 12:30 – 2:00 PM on Saturday January 10<sup>th</sup>  
**Brighton Marine Health Center, Brighton** from 1:00 – 2:30 PM on Sunday January 11<sup>th</sup>  
**Freedom House, Dorchester** from 4:00 – 5:30 PM on Sunday January 11<sup>th</sup>  
**Chelsea Public Library, Chelsea** 10:00 – 11:30 AM on Saturday January 31<sup>st</sup>  
**Pilot House, North End** from 12:30 – 2:00 PM on Saturday January 31<sup>st</sup>

Please consider stopping by a meeting closest to your neighborhood. If you need additional information, call my district offices at (617) 621-6208. I look forward to talking with you.

