



Minnesota's 4th District **E-Report!**

Congresswoman Betty McCollum

"Serving Minnesota's Families"



JULY 11, 2003

Hot News!

Rev. Mua Released

This week, Rep. Betty McCollum celebrated the release and safe return to St. Paul of Rev. Naw-Karl Mua from Laos.

"I want to express my sincere appreciation to U.S. Ambassador Douglas Hartwick and his Embassy staff who have worked tirelessly to achieve this outcome. Their diplomatic efforts were successful in securing Rev. Mua's release," McCollum said.

The 44-year-old pastor of the Light of Life Lutheran Church in Maplewood was arrested June 4 with two European journalists for the alleged involvement in the death of a Laotian security official. Mua was reportedly serving as a guide and translator for the journalists.

"It is now time to refocus U.S. efforts to improve our diplomatic and economic relationship with Laos. Successful cooperation between the U.S. and Laos must continue in recovering the remains of missing American servicemen, as well as efforts in fighting drug trafficking and terrorism. We must also continue to pressure the Lao government to improve their record on human rights and religious freedom.

The return of Mr. Mua to the United States is an important step forward in building our relationship with Laos," McCollum said.

McCollum supports the efforts of Secretary of State Colin Powell and the Bush Administration to press for better human rights, religious freedom and economic opportunities through normalized trade relations.

Next Week on the House Floor

H.R. 2210 - Head Start Authorization Act

H.R. 1950 - State Department Authorization bill for FY 2004 - 2005

H.R. 2691 - Interior Appropriations Bill for FY 2004



Rep. Betty McCollum is pictured with Greg Hildebrandt, a St. Paul native and senior at Highland Park High School. Greg introduced Rep. McCollum before she addressed 393 aspiring young leaders with the Congressional Youth Leadership Council. McCollum discussed general floor operation and spoke to the issues the students have been working on in their "Model Congress".

Overtime Pay Update

This week the U.S. House of Representatives debated H.R. 2660, the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2004. Rep. McCollum joined her Democratic colleagues in supporting an amendment to the spending bill that would block the Bush Administration from implementing an ill-advised rule change which will eliminate overtime pay for nearly eight million hard working Americans.

In March, the Administration delivered a Labor Department plan with proposed changes that would alter the definitions of who qualifies for overtime pay and in doing so, would deny millions of workers and their families overtime pay.

The amendment failed by a vote of 213 to 210.

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