



Congressman Bud Cramer

December 2007 E-Newsletter

[Home](#) | [About Bud](#) | [Contact Bud](#) | [Issues](#) | [News](#) | [Helping You](#) | [Photos](#) | [5th District](#) | [Kid's Zone](#)

From the opening of the HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology to the National Alabama railcar manufacturing plant announcement, 2007 was a tremendous year for economic development throughout North Alabama. I know we will continue to build upon these successes in the new year. I wish you all a joyous holiday season and a happy new year.

Bud Cramer

News From Washington

Representative Cramer announced this month House approval of legislation ensuring servicemembers who are forced to leave the military due to active duty injuries are paid the full amount of any bonus they would have received if they were able to remain in the military. Representative Cramer was a cosponsor of this legislation.

“I was disappointed to learn of instances when wounded soldiers who can no longer serve due to injuries were required to pay back portions of their enlistment bonus,” said Cramer. **“I was proud to cosponsor this bill that puts an end to this practice and ensures that the military upholds its obligations to those who honorably serve our country.”** [\[more\]](#)

Representative Cramer also announced passage of legislation supporting efforts to protect kids across the country from abuse and exploitation. Among the legislation approved by the House included a bill cosponsored by Cramer increasing funding for and reauthorizing the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) as the national clearinghouse and coordinator of investigations of missing and exploited children. The House also approved a bill to strengthen reporting requirements internet service providers must follow when reporting child pornography. [\[more\]](#)

Appropriations Update

In December, the U.S. House of Representatives approved the conference agreement for the Fiscal Year 2008 Consolidated Appropriations Act. This agreement consisted of eleven appropriations bills for FY 2008, and included funding for the entire federal government except the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD). Funding for DoD was signed into law in November.

Representative Cramer, a member of the House Appropriations Committee, announced the conference agreement included funding for projects and programs throughout North Alabama. [\[more\]](#)

Other highlights of the conference agreement include:

- An additional \$600 million to help continue relief efforts for farmers affected by natural disasters in 2005, 2006, and 2007. [\[more\]](#)
- The largest single funding increase in the history of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. [\[more\]](#)
- \$9.4 billion for Customs and Border Protection, which includes funding for the hiring of additional Border Patrol Agents and construction of fencing along the U.S. border. [\[more\]](#)
- \$2.7 billion for law enforcement agencies across the country, including \$61.2 million to help combat Meth production and distribution. [\[more\]](#)



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More News From Washington

Page Two of Two

The House also approved legislation this month creating the toughest lead standard in the world for child products sold in the United States. This bill significantly lowers the amount of lead that products made for children can contain and requires mandatory safety standards for nursery products such as cribs and high chairs.

Additionally, this bill strengthens notices of product recall announcements and other child product safety information, and requires manufactures to include distinguishing and recognizable marks on products and packaging of children's products to help parents identify items being recalled by the manufacturer. [\[more\]](#)

Representative Cramer also announced that the House approved legislation ensuring consumers are not unknowingly removed from the Do-Not-Call registry. Current law allows the FTC to remove phone numbers after five years unless each number is re-registered prior to its five-year limit. This legislation prevents the FTC from automatically removing phone numbers from the Do-Not-Call registry. [\[more\]](#)

Finally, the House approved legislation providing physicians with a temporary increase in Medicare reimbursement rates. Specifically, this legislation prohibits scheduled cuts to the Medicare's physician payment rate for six months. Instead, physicians will receive a 0.5 percent reimbursement rate increase throughout the six month extension.

“This legislation ensures that doctors in North Alabama can continue to provide a high level of service for their Medicare patients until a permanent extension can be reached,” said Cramer. [\[more\]](#)

News From the Fifth District



Pictured on the left, Representative Cramer joined Governor Riley and officials from Jackson County to celebrate the opening of a new railroad overpass in Bridgeport. The new 8th street bridge replaces a bridge opened in 1916 but closed in the 1990s for safety concerns.

In addition, Cramer helped local officials in Bridgeport break ground on a new hospital on Highway 72. The 24-hour medical facility will have 25 beds.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THESE AND OTHER NEWS ITEMS PLEASE VISIT:
<http://cramer.house.gov>