

National Economic Woes Hit Home: Fair Lawn Small Business Owner Outlines Struggle to Stay Afloat at Listening Session

March 2008 Fair Lawn Listening Session

Pictured: Congressman Rothman answers a question during the Fair Lawn Listening Session. [Click here to download this photo as a high-resolution image.](#)

National Economic Woes Hit Home: Local Small Business Owner Outlines Struggle to Stay Afloat at Fair Lawn Listening Session

(Fair Lawn, NJ)- On the evening of Tuesday, March 18, 2008, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ) hosted one of his March 2008 Listening Sessions in the Fair Lawn Council Chambers. During the two-hour meeting, questions about the war in Iraq and economy dominated the discussion. One of the most compelling moments of the night came when a local bakery owner explained how the rising cost of commodities like eggs and milk, combined with the drop in household income for non-necessities such as pastries, along with the increased transportation costs caused by rising gas prices, are squeezing him out of business. It was a striking, real-life example of how the nationwide economic chaos that President Bush has presided over can be particularly harmful to local family businesses.

"It is appalling that the President continues to paint a rosy picture of the economy and defends wasting tens of billions of dollars per month in Iraq while Americans find themselves losing homes, closing businesses, and barely able to make ends meet. Congress will continue to try to work with this Administration and Republicans to address the causes of the economic instability and take action to help those homeowners and individuals in crisis now," says Rothman.

In the meantime, Rothman's office is working with the bake shop owner who spoke to identify small business grants and small loans that may be available to him.

Nationally, Congress has enacted an economic stimulus package that will provide relief to families in need, including the disbursement of Recovery Rebates, and will raise loan limits for mortgages backed by the Federal Housing Authority, Fannie Mae, and Freddie Mac. Increased loan limits at these agencies will allow more families to get into mortgages with better terms, keeping the American Dream of homeownership within reach.

Congress is also considering legislation to invest in the creation of 'green jobs' in the renewable and alternative energy sectors, strengthen consumer protections against risky housing loans in the future, increase targeted tax relief for small business owners and middle income families instead of extending tax cuts for individuals making over \$1 million, and expand the supply of affordable rental housing to lower the need for risky mortgages like those which have so damaged the U.S. economy.

Congressman Rothman also argues that the billions of dollars spent policing the Iraqi civil war each month could be better used investing in the American economy, providing health care and employment services for veterans returning from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and beefing up our homeland security.

Additional Photos

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