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# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1904

January 2008

COMMITTEES:  
HOMELAND SECURITY AND  
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS,  
RANKING MEMBER  
ARMED SERVICES  
SPECIAL COMMITTEE  
ON AGING

Dear Citizens of Gardiner:

As we mark the beginning of 2008, I welcome this opportunity to share some of the work I've done during the past year representing Maine in the United States Senate.

Maine plays a critical role in our national security through the men and women who serve in our active duty forces and our National Guard and Reserves and through the skilled employees who work at our defense businesses and installations. As a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I successfully supported the vital work at Bath Iron Works, Pratt & Whitney, the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, and the Defense Finance and Accounting Center, as well as at smaller companies like Hodgdon Yachts and Global Research Technologies.

On the Senate Homeland Security Committee, I have worked to better protect our nation against the threat of terrorist attacks and to strengthen the federal partnership with our emergency managers and first responders in responding to natural disasters. The disruption of terrorist plots last year and the improved federal response to natural disasters, such as the Patriots' Day storm here in Maine and the wildfires in California, demonstrate that these efforts are producing real results. Building on our past successful efforts to reform the intelligence community and to increase security at our nation's seaports and chemical facilities, I worked with Senator Joe Lieberman again, to gain approval of a new law further strengthening our homeland security.

With so many pressing needs in this country, we cannot afford to see taxpayers' dollars lost to waste, fraud, and abuse. Working with the Inspectors General, I have written a bipartisan bill to reform wasteful government contracting practices. The Senate approved this bill in November, and I hope it will become law later this year.

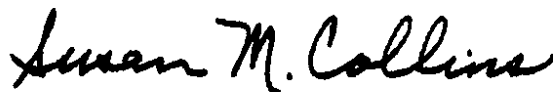
Congress last year passed several bills that I advocated to improve health care, expand aid for education, and protect our environment. These include increased funding for the program to expand access to dental services in rural communities, additional funding for diabetes research, and an extension of a tax deduction for teachers. As a member of the Special Committee on Aging, I worked to create a Task Force on Alzheimer's Disease and introduced a bipartisan bill to block cuts in home health care.

Record-high energy costs are imposing a tremendous burden on our low-income families, truckers, and small businesses. With a bipartisan coalition of Senators, including Olympia Snowe, I fought for increased funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). We secured a \$400 million increase over last-year's level and will continue to press for additional funding. I also have called upon the Department of Energy to stop buying oil for the Strategic Petroleum Reserve until prices moderate. There is no compelling justification for the Department to take oil off the market at a time when prices are sky high and consumers are struggling to heat their homes and fill their gas tanks.

We need to embrace the goal of energy independence to reduce our reliance on imported oil by developing bio fuels, such as cellulosic ethanol, by increasing fuel efficiency standards for vehicles, and by supporting research into better technology. The new energy law takes significant steps in the right direction.

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve the great State of Maine. If ever I may be of assistance to you, please do contact my Augusta office at 622-8414.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins