

Congressional Member Spotlight: Spencer Bachus



Congressman Spencer Bachus (AL-R, 6th)

Electric Cities of Alabama will feature a monthly spotlight on Alabama's Congressional Delegation to help its members learn more about the Alabama Congressional Members and their views on legislation. This month's spotlight is Congressman Spencer Bachus.

Congressman Spencer Bachus was re-elected by the sixth congressional district to serve his tenth term in the U.S. House of Representatives. In the 112th congress, Bachus serves as Chairman of the House Financial Services Committee, which holds jurisdiction over the banking, securities, insurance, housing, and domestic and international monetary policy sectors.

Bachus earlier served in the State Senate where, prior to his election in 1982, no Republican had served in the body since Reconstruction. He was the first Republican ever elected to the State School Board.

In the Alabama State Senate, Congressman Bachus received the

Legislator of the Year Award from the Department of Human Resources. He was also the author of state domestic abuse statutes and wrote the first law in Alabama that penalizes repeat DUI offenders.

In the U.S. House, Congressman Bachus serves as a conservative who supports tax relief, fiscal responsibility, a strong national defense and traditional values. He has been named Guardian of Small Business by the National Federation of Independent Business, Friend of the Taxpayer by Americans for Tax Reform, Friend of the Family by the Christian Coalition and has received the Spirit of Free Enterprise Award from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Congressman Bachus helped rewrite the federal funding formula on how gas tax dollars are distributed to the states. Alabama now receives an average of \$200 million more per year in federal transportation funds for projects like Corridor X and the Northern Beltline. On health care, Bachus stopped a Clinton administration plan that would have cut Medicaid payments to Alabama by \$300 million a year and wrote a law permitting Medicare coverage for prostate cancer screenings.

Congressman Bachus authored the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions (FACT) Act, which contains powerful identity theft protections and entitles consumers to a free copy of their credit report.

Other major bills include deposit insurance reform, which increased FDIC coverage levels for account holders; regulatory relief legislation

that will help eliminate unnecessary and duplicative paperwork costs placed on banks and credit unions; and Check 21, which modernized the check clearing process. The long campaign of Congressman Bachus to ban illegal internet gambling culminated in October 2006 when President Bush signed a law barring the use of credit cards and financial instruments on gambling websites.

A native of Birmingham, Congressman Bachus graduated from Auburn University and the University of Alabama School of Law. He and his wife Linda live in Vestavia Hills and are the parents of five children. Prior to his public service career, Congressman Bachus was a practicing attorney.

What do you feel is the greatest obstacle in the new Congress?

The biggest issue facing Congress is the need to cut spending and reduce the national debt, which now stands at a record level of more than \$14 trillion. Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke has stated, "Unless we as a nation make a strong commitment to fiscal responsibility, we will have neither financial stability nor healthy economic growth." The Chairman of our Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mike Mullen, stated in a CNN interview that the debt is "the most significant threat to our national security." With just the interest we pay on our debt, China can afford to buy three new Joint Strike Fighters every week and still have \$50 million left over. The debt problem cannot be solved by cuts in discretionary

continued on page 3

Congressional Member Spotlight: Bachus (Continued)

spending alone. Entitlement reform must be part of the answer as well.

Do you feel that cap-and-trade legislation has a future during this Congress?

The last thing that families and businesses can afford is a national energy tax, which would be the result of what should properly be called "cap and tax" legislation. It would inevitably lead to even higher gasoline prices and make coal more expensive to use. Knowing that the House Republican majority will not pass "cap and tax," the Environmental Protection Agency has initiated an attempt to impose greenhouse gas regulations by its own fiat. On April 7, I voted with a majority of my colleagues in the House to pass the Energy Tax Prevention Act, which would prohibit the EPA from unilaterally issuing regulations which would make gasoline, electricity, and other forms of energy much more expensive. It would be a costly blow that our weak economy is ill-equipped to absorb.

What has changed the most during your tenure in Congress?

The public's concern about excessive government spending has been the most pronounced change. The fed-

eral government has run trillion-dollar-plus deficits in each of the last three years and it has taken on massive debt liabilities as a result of the failed stimulus package, the new health care law, the bailouts, and new spending programs. No family can afford to live on borrowed money and borrowed time for long, and neither can the federal government. The American public stated very clearly in last November's elections that they want an end to the runaway spending. They want the federal government to implement significant spending cuts and structural budget reforms so that the U.S. does not land in the same perilous financial condition that some of the countries in Europe find themselves in.

Do you feel domestic energy production will increase or decrease this Congress?

It has long been my view that the U.S. needs a balanced energy policy to reduce our dependence on volatile imported oil. This involves the development of our ample domestic oil, natural gas, and coal resources as well as the growth of nuclear, solar, and wind power. Renewable fuels and conservation are also key components. Unfortunately, many regulations being issued by the

Administration are having the effect of discouraging the development of our own domestic resources, which both leaves the U.S. more vulnerable to imported oil from hostile regimes and costs our country the new jobs that exploration and production would generate. Our House Majority is addressing the issue with the American Energy Initiative, an ongoing effort focused on expanding U.S. energy production to lower costs and create jobs.

What would you like ECA Members to know about you?

It has been my pleasure to work with Electric Cities of Alabama for many years, and it was a high honor to receive your Distinguished Service Award for 2009. Electric Cities of Alabama, and the communities you represent, have a reputation for being a trusted source of information on energy policy. Congress cannot make good laws unless it hears from those affected by those policies on a daily basis, so I always welcome hearing from you. It is a privilege to be able to represent the people of Alabama in the U.S. Congress, and I am there first and foremost to serve the needs of our people.



ECA Trivia Grid

A _____ circuit only allows one path for current?

Be the first to email the correct answer to Andrea Salvador at asalvador@electriccities.org and win a \$25.00 gift card. Good Luck!

Last month's winner was John Averrett from Goodwyn, Mills & Cawood, Inc. John answered "xfmr" to the following question: What is the most common abbreviation for the word "transformer"? Congratulations John!