

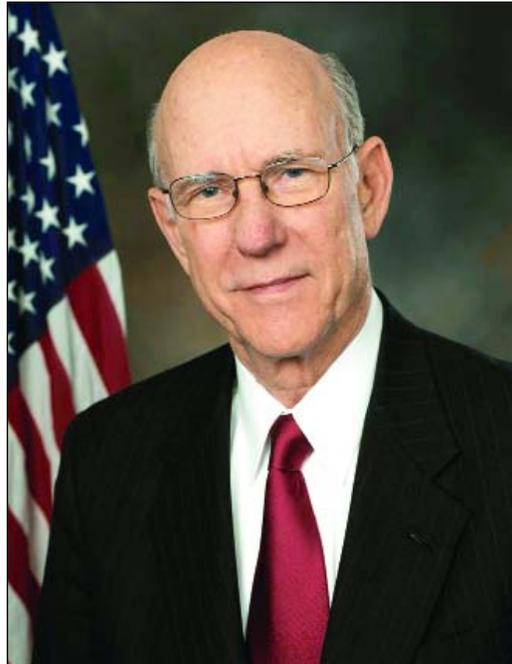
Legislative letters support Kansas water

The Kansas Rural Water Association has asked to reprint the speech I presented at their 38th Annual Conference and Exhibition on Wednesday, March 30. It was good for me to be a guest at the conference in Wichita to see friends and meet many of the dedicated Kansans who help keep our State's water clean and safe. After an address by Wichita Mayor Carlos Mayans and an introduction by KRWA Board Member Dennis Schwartz, I said the following words to KRWA attendees at Wednesday's luncheon.

I want to take some time to express my thanks for the Kansas Rural Water Association for the job it does in sustaining Kansas communities.

Former Kansas Senator Frank Carlson said, "It's your friends and family who make you what you are." In this case, it is members of the Kansas Rural Water Association who make this association a well respected organization across the state. Everyone here who runs the water systems and provides the equipment to keep taps open does an incredible job representing and assisting rural water systems across Kansas.

I rely on the Kansas Rural Water Association whenever a rural water issue pops up on my radar screen. You give me concrete examples from Kansas water suppliers when I need them to push back on the EPA when it is set out to write inflexible regulations designed for New York City-sized systems. EPA gets pretty exasperated with me when I ask, "how do towns like Lincoln or Sedan not only comply with new regulations, but how do they pay for them?"



everyday to his house. Since this man lived in the service area of a rural water district, I told staff to get in touch with Elmer and get a read on the situation.

The next thing I heard, three Kansas Rural Water Association employees – on their own time – visited the man's house, assessed the situation, and made repairs to his home to re-establish the water supply.

I want to recognize Greg Duryea, Shane Holthaus and Lonnie Boller for their work in response to my inquiry and their volunteer service.

I rely on the Kansas Rural Water Association whenever a rural water issue pops up on my radar screen.

On your behalf, I am pleased to announce today that I have already signed three letters that have been hand delivered, that you have asked me to write regarding rural water issues.

The Kansas Rural Water Association also never forgets the importance of water. I want to share a quick story about what I mean. I often tell Kansans that I am proud to be their court of last resort. They contact me when they have reached a dead end with a federal or state agency, and more times than not, we find a reasonable solution.

Last December, a Kansan e-mailed my office alerting me to his dilemma of not having a running water supply. He was hauling water

They symbolize the Kansas Rural Water Association's concern and care for reliable and affordable water supplies.

On your behalf, I am pleased to announce today that I have already signed three letters that have been hand delivered, that you have asked me to write regarding rural water issues.

The first one, to Senator Jim Inhofe, aims to ensure funding remains for circuit riders – those dedicated individuals who help out

communities in running their water plants.

Likewise, I strongly support the request of \$7 million for the USDA source water protection, ensuring that wellfields and rivers



Senator Pat Roberts, Pat Shaffer, and Dennis Schwartz, KRWA past and present KRWA board presidents.

are protected from contamination. I'll send that message in a letter to Senator Bob Bennett – who rides herd for the Ag spending on the Appropriations Committee. I'll also make that case that we must have a minimum of \$850 million for USDA's Rural Water Loan and Grant programs. We need it in Kansas.

Two weeks ago the Senate wrapped up its work on this year's budget. At times it seems like a circus, with a very delicate juggling act trying to make sense out of what programs should and should not be cut. Rather than three rings, the congressional circus has two. One is entitlement spending and the other is discretionary spending. The entitlement ring is about \$1.8 trillion and the discretionary spending ring is \$843 billion.

Aside from these annual budget hoops that we make rural water go through in pleading your case on behalf of all your customers who depend on water, the legislative arena for water is quiet. Other than maybe some

oversight hearings on the Clean Water Act or Safe Drinking Water Act, we are not working on any significant new legislation impacting your association.

Let me take a few minutes now to turn to another subject – one that takes up much of my time in Washington. Sometimes I say it is like a fire hose in the face; there is a little joke for the water people... As Chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee I would like to chat with you about our national security.

It goes without saying that intelligence has long been crucial to

defending the United States and its interests. Given the grave dangers our nation now faces from threats like terrorism and proliferation, useful intelligence has not only become even more critical, but it must also be more timely and more accurate.

As Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, it is my job and the job of the Committee, to oversee the fifteen agencies which make up the Intelligence Community and ensure that they provide policymakers and warfighters with timely, accurate and useful intelligence. I joined the Committee in 1997 and was privileged to become its Chairman in 2003. I don't think that it would be an overstatement to say that I have served on the Committee during one of the most interesting and challenging periods in the Committee's 29-year history.

Soon after the fall of Baghdad in 2003, and just a few months after I assumed the Chairmanship, the Committee began a review of the Intelligence Community's pre-war assessments on Iraq's WMD programs. One year later we published a 511-page report that documented serious problems in our Intelligence Community.

Quick on the heels of that report, the 9/11 Commission published its own report documenting many of the same problems that we had found in our Iraq report. Congress then immediately began a spirited debate about how to remedy some of these problems, and we soon passed the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004. This bill is not the best possible bill, but the best bill possible.

The intelligence reform bill created an important new position called the Director of National Intelligence, also known as the DNI. The President has made an outstanding choice in his



KRWA General Manager Elmer Ronnebaum and State USDA Rural Development Director Chuck Banks visit with Senator Roberts before the luncheon.

nomination for the first DNI, Ambassador John Negroponte, who just finished up a very difficult tour as our first Ambassador to Baghdad since the war in Iraq.

A significant portion of our work right off the bat will involve confirmation of the new Director of National Intelligence. We'll work with him to continue the intelligence reform process.

In working with the new DNI to continue the intelligence reform process, I intend to focus on what I call the "big three" reform issues:

- Improving human intelligence (or HUMINT) collection;
- Improving intelligence analysis, and;
- Moving from a culture of information ownership to a culture of information access within the Community.

You may not be familiar with the term "information access." We have been talking for quite some time about the need for "information sharing" among our intelligence agencies. I believe "information sharing" is a limited idea that falsely implies that the data collector is also the data owner. It relies on collectors to push information to those who need it.

We need to think differently about this. I believe it is now time to begin working towards a more powerful concept that I call "information access." This means that while sensitive information must still be managed for security purposes, cleared analysts should be able to pull information however or wherever collected by searching all intelligence databases, without having to wait for any one agency to push the information to them as we still do today.

In addition to the "big three" reform issues of HUMINT, analysis and information access, the Committee will also examine the allocation of Intelligence Community resources. We have significantly increased intelligence funding since 9/11, and the question is now less a matter of, "Do they have enough?" than "Are they spending it wisely?"

Finally, we will also examine the Intelligence Community's capabilities. The Committee learned the hard way from the Iraq WMD intelligence failure that we cannot always take the Intelligence



Senator Roberts is interviewed by the Wichita news media after the KRWA luncheon.

Community's assessments at face value. Using the methodologies we used so successfully in our review of the pre-war Iraq assessments, we will look deeper into the Intelligence Community's work on critical threat issues like Iran, North Korea, China, proliferation and terrorism, to try to prevent intelligence failures like Iraq from happening again. This work has already begun with an examination of the Intelligence Community's capabilities with respect to Iran. We call it pre-emptive oversight.

Of course, the world and Washington politics will not stand still for the next two years and we will no doubt also spend much of our time reacting to events that cannot be imagined or anticipated today. I will not, however, allow events of the day to cause me to lose sight of the objectives I just outlined as well as the ultimate goal: a more rationally organized Intelligence Community, with a clear chain of command and the accountability that comes with it.



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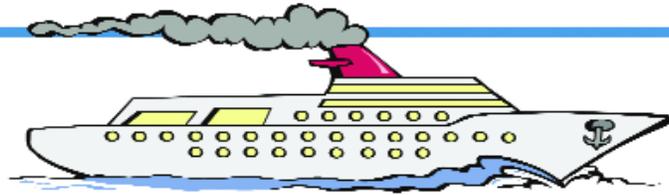
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