

U.S. Representative
JUSTIN AMASH
Proudly Representing the Third District of Michigan

 amash.house.gov

 [facebook.com/
repjustinamash](https://facebook.com/repjustinamash)

 (202) 225-3831



[View this e-mail as a web page.](#)

January 28, 2012

Dear Friend,

Thank you for allowing me periodically to provide you with information relating to my office and what is happening in Congress. The updates below represent only a small sample of the activities that take place in the House of Representatives. **You may find more information and the latest updates on my work in Congress on my [Facebook Page](#), where I explain every vote I take.** Please note that you do not need to have a Facebook account to view my posts.

Preserving Free and Open Internet

Two pieces of legislation that would give the federal government unprecedented power to censor Internet content have stalled in Congress. As written, [H.R. 3261](#), the Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA), and [S. 968](#), the PROTECT IP Act (PIPA), would stifle the free flow of information and ideas online.

Among other things, SOPA would permit the federal government to blacklist entire websites accused of containing even one instance of copyright-infringing material. The government also would be able to order Internet service providers, payment processing companies, and search engines not to interact with the allegedly offending sites. PIPA would grant similar powers.

The Internet has been an engine of economic growth and an unsurpassed medium for free speech. Adequate protection of intellectual property rights presents unique challenges in this digital environment, but Congress must consider the impact of any legislation on our constitutionally protected rights, including free speech.

State of the Union: An Hour of Contradiction

The most serious challenges facing our country are the economy and the crushing national debt, which inevitably will cause inflation to skyrocket, impoverish savers, and harm the most needy. In the State of the Union address on Tuesday, the President did not spend even a minute on genuine proposals to prevent this impending crisis.

The President discussed tax reform that would unleash the American economy, but then he reverted right back to discussing which favored industries he would subsidize and which he would penalize. He emphasized helping the middle class, who still face a historically high unemployment rate of more than eight percent, but his speech

focused on stripping consumers of choice and taking from the middle class to spend on large corporations that have lobbied for special treatment. I had hoped for better from the President.

Opposing Indefinite Detention of American Citizens

The [National Defense Authorization Act \(NDAA\) for Fiscal Year 2012](#) includes a provision giving the President sweeping new power to indefinitely detain American citizens caught on American soil, without charge or trial. This provision, sec. 1021, was tucked into an 1800-page conference report that was shuttled through Congress in a matter of days.

The provision authorizes the President to detain persons who "substantially supported" forces "associated" with al-Qaeda or the Taliban that "are engaged in hostilities" against the U.S. or its "coalition partners." None of the quoted terms are defined. We do not know what constitutes substantial support, hostilities, our coalition partners, or associated forces.

Whom could this cover? An American citizen living in Michigan makes a one-time donation to a non-violent humanitarian group. Years later, the group commits hostile acts against an ally of the U.S. Under the NDAA, if the President determines the group was "associated" with terrorists, the President is authorized to detain the donor indefinitely, and without charge or trial.

Our Constitution does not permit the federal government to do this. I strongly believe in protecting the country's security and equipping our Armed Forces with the tools they need to defeat our enemies. But the American people cannot support measures that, in the name of security, violate our constitutional rights.

To learn more and help spread awareness, please read and feel free to share my [Facebook Note on the NDAA](#).

Remembering Lives Lost

Approximately 50 million babies have been aborted since the Supreme Court decided Roe v. Wade thirty-nine years ago, and today, around 20 percent of all pregnancies in the United States end in abortion.

The right to life is our most fundamental right, and it is guaranteed under our Constitution. We cannot endure as a nation of liberty if we deny this right to the weakest among us: the unborn.

I recently cosponsored [H.R. 3803](#), the District of Columbia Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act. Within Washington, D.C., this legislation would prohibit the abortion of any baby that is at least 20 weeks old. H.R. 3803 makes exceptions to protect the life of the mother, or to prevent substantial and irreversible physical impairment of a major bodily function.

Research shows an unborn child, at twenty weeks old, can feel the pain caused by an abortion procedure. D.C. law provides minimal protection for the lives of unborn children, and this legislation is a significant step for their protection. I believe life begins at conception, and we must protect life at every stage.

Stopping the National Debt

January 24, 2012, marked 1,000 days since the United States Senate has passed a budget—**twice** the amount of time it took for the Constitutional Convention to draft, approve, and enact the United States Constitution. On January 12, the national debt reached \$15.23 trillion, more than 100 percent of United States GDP. That's \$128,300 of debt for every American household.

Our country's fiscal situation will not improve unless Members of Congress take serious action. I do not support breaking promises made to those at or near retirement, but to balance the budget, everything else must be on the table—corporate welfare, special tax breaks and subsidies, military spending, and entitlement reform.

The people of Michigan and the United States face considerable economic difficulties. Short-term fixes offer only temporary relief and often cause severe unintended consequences down the road. I am committed to working with all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to develop a sustainable federal budget.

In Brief

-On January 10, 2012, I held a [town hall](#) meeting at the Main Branch of the Grand Rapids Public Library to discuss issues currently facing Congress and answer questions from the audience. I am encouraged to see that so many people in Michigan's Third District are engaged in the political process and open to independent, nonpartisan approaches. Information on upcoming town halls will be posted on my [website](#) and my [Facebook Page](#).

-If you plan to be in Washington, D.C., over spring break, please feel free to stop by my office. Located in 114 Cannon House Office Building, my office is open during regular business hours. We also would be happy to assist you with [tour requests](#). For best results, please contact us a few months in advance.

Sincerely,



Justin Amash
United States Representative
Third District of Michigan

[Click here to sign up for my e-newsletter.](#)

Please do not reply directly to this e-mail address, as it is an unattended mailbox. You can reach my office at <http://amash.house.gov/contact-me>.



[Unsubscribe](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Contact Justin](#)