
CAPITOL CONNECTION

A Weekly Update of News and Views
For Opinion Shapers and Policy Makers

Congressman Gary G. Miller
42nd District, California



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Defense Authorization Bill Targets Foothill South Toll Road

Language included this week in the annual Defense Authorization bill could substantially slow work extending a local toll road. The Foothill South project, which would extend the 241 from its current end at Oso Parkway to the I-5 near San Clemente, would reduce congestion on the I-5 by 70 percent during the evening peak hours. However, without this project, traffic would increase by 60 percent at the Orange-San Diego county line between now and 2025. Even though the project will enter the United States Marine Corps Camp Pendleton, language in the bill bars the federal government from approving the construction of any new roads on Camp Pendleton property without first complying with all California state laws. Congressman Miller is disappointed that this project, which has been in the approval process for decades, has been given a new hurdle to clear that will ultimately delay construction. He will continue to support every effort to move this project forward and remove unnecessary impediments to reducing traffic congestion in Southern California.

Members of Congress Urge Release of Border Patrol Agents by Christmas

This week, Congressman Miller joined more than 65 of his House colleagues in sending a letter to President Bush urging him to release Border Patrol Agents Ignacio Ramos and Jose Compean and bring them home to their families by Christmas. Agents Ramos and Compean, who were convicted of shooting and wounding an illegal alien who was attempting to smuggle 700 pounds of marijuana across the border, were sentenced to 12 and 11 years in federal prison, respectively. Currently, the case is on appeal before the Fifth Circuit Court of Texas. While Congressman Miller continues to fight this injustice, he remains committed to ensuring our Border Patrol officers have the resources they need to protect our nation's borders.

Congressman Miller Fights for Transportation Funds

Congressman Miller this week led a letter signed by the entire Southern California congressional delegation urging that our region receive its fair share of transportation funds. Under guidelines issued by the California Transportation Commission, only approximately 56 percent of Proposition 1B goods movement funds will go to the five-county Southern California region. However, over 80 percent of the state's containerized cargo travels through the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles. Congressman Miller believes strongly that the Commission's actions severely shortchange a region in dire need of relief. It is well documented that residents of Southern California face disproportionate impacts when it comes to health risks and traffic congestion associated with goods movement and he will fight to ensure that our region receives its fair share of funds to address these serious problems.

Congress Votes to Honor Fire Fighters

This week, the House of Representatives unanimously voted for the designation of a National Fire Fighter Appreciation Day to honor and celebrate the fire fighters of the United States. Congressman Miller was a proud cosponsor of this legislation because he recognizes the immeasurable benefit fire fighters provide to their community. More than anyone, Southern Californians understand the dangers posed by fires. Recently, almost one million Southern Californians were displaced in the largest evacuation in state history as a result of at least 16 simultaneous wildfires. More than 350,000 houses were evacuated. Congressman Miller is pleased that the House recognized the need to recognize a community of heroes dedicated to protecting our hearths and homes.

Department of Justice Has Tips on How to Stay Safe This Holiday Season

The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), under the Department of Justice, would like to help keep you safe this holiday season. This holiday season, COPS has created Holiday Safety Toolkits to educate you on how to keep from becoming victims of the most common holiday crimes. These Toolkits cover a variety of issues including identity theft, ATM robbery, car theft, home burglary and drunk driving. To get more information or to download a Toolkit, visit the COPS website at <http://www.cops.usdoj.gov> or call (800) 421-6770.

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