
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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Economic Stimulus Package Approved by Congress

On Thursday, the House and Senate approved a revised stimulus package to help get our economy moving again. The measure now heads to the President's desk where it is expected to be signed into law shortly. The central features of the stimulus package are tax rebate checks designed to spur consumer spending and housing provisions to help families keep their homes. For those with income below a certain level, rebate checks will range in size from \$300 to \$1,200 depending on an individual's income and tax filing status, with an additional \$300 added for each child in the family. In a change from an earlier draft of the bill, rebate checks will also go to senior citizens on Social Security and disabled veterans. In addition, the bill was amended to reinforce protections against illegal aliens collecting tax rebate checks. Now individuals will only be eligible if they have a valid Social Security number. Illegal aliens who file taxes using a falsified or stolen Social Security number will be committing tax fraud and will be punished accordingly. In an effort to stabilize housing markets in high-cost areas of the country, the bill also includes a provision long championed by Congressman Miller to increase the loan limits for FHA, Fannie Mae, and Freddie Mac, thereby allowing Southern Californians access to safer, more affordable mortgage products. Congressman Miller was proud to support this important legislation when it came to the floor because he believes that as our economy slows down it is vital that we speed relief to hard-working American families.

Border Security Funds Included in President's Fiscal Year 2009 Budget

This week, President Bush submitted his budget to Congress for Fiscal Year 2009. The proposal calls for nearly \$500 million for 2,200 new Border Patrol agents and \$2 billion to build fencing along our Southern border. The President is also proposing \$100 million for a Southwest Border Enforcement Initiative to combat alien and drug smuggling. Additionally, the President's budget proposal includes a \$38 million increase to fund the costs associated with detaining immigration offenders apprehended by the Department of Homeland Security. Congressman Miller is pleased that the President has included funding for the completion of the border fence and will work with Congress to ensure border security is a top budgetary priority in the coming year.

Congress Acts to Protect Americans from Unwanted Telemarketing Calls

On Wednesday, the House unanimously approved a measure allowing the government to continue operating the popular Do-Not-Call List. Established in 2003, the Do-Not-Call List currently protects 145 million registered phone numbers from unwanted and irritating telemarketing calls. Congressman Miller is proud that the House has passed this commonsense measure to protect American consumers from unscrupulous business practices. He looks forward to it being signed into law by President Bush in the coming days. At that time, the President is also expected to sign a bill passed by the House late last year and approved this week by the Senate to prevent consumers from having to reregister their phone numbers every five years in order to keep them on the list.

Congressman Miller Urges Support for 241 Toll Road Project

Earlier this week, the California Coastal Commission held a hearing on the future of the 241 Toll Road Project. Joined by five area Members of Congress, Congressman Miller sent a letter to be read into the record at the hearing urging members of the Commission to support construction of the last segment of the 67-mile toll road system. In particular, Congressman Miller and his colleagues expressed their concerns about traffic congestion in the region and the lack of an alternative plan to alleviate traffic pressures on the I-5 freeway. As previous studies have indicated, the widening of the I-5 would require the demolition of 800 homes, 300 businesses, and would cost more than \$2 billion dollars. While the Coastal Commission declined to endorse the project, Congressman Miller will continue to strongly support this worthy enterprise through the appeals process because he believes it will allow residents of southern Orange County to spend less time on the road and more time at home with their families.