

---

# CAPITOL CONNECTION

A Weekly Update of News and Views  
For Opinion Shapers and Policy Makers  
**Congressman Gary G. Miller**  
**42<sup>nd</sup> District, California**



March 7, 2008

---

## **New Study Reveals Costs of Illegal Immigration to Border Communities**

A new study released this week details the costs incurred by local law enforcement and criminal justice services to apprehend, transport, and convict criminal illegal aliens. This report found that the 24 border counties in Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas are spending a disproportionate amount of local tax dollars on criminal aliens instead of using these funds to improve schools, roads, and public safety. The study also found that for Fiscal Year 2006 the cost of illegal immigration to California's border counties was over \$82 million for law enforcement expenses alone. During that same time period, the federal government reimbursed those same counties only \$2.4 million for the cost of jailing illegal aliens. Congressman Miller is outraged that the federal government has failed to secure our borders and local taxpayers have suffered as a result. He firmly believes that the federal government should cover the costs associated with apprehending and detaining illegal immigrants and will work with his colleagues to see that our nation's immigration laws are fully enforced.

## **House Passes Mental Health Parity Legislation**

The House this week approved the Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act, a bill requiring insurers to provide expanded access to mental health services. Congressman Miller commends his colleagues for coming together to ensure Americans can receive the care that is necessary. However, he reluctantly opposed the bill because he has serious concerns about extraneous provisions that were added at the last minute. In order to comply with budgetary rules, language was included that would raise the cost of doing business for companies providing low cost medication to the Medicaid program and stifle the growth of certain specialty hospitals. In a time when we should be encouraging the expansion of all types of medical care, we should not be punishing one part of the medical field in order to pay for the expansion of another. Congressman Miller believes that the House instead should have considered the Senate's mental health parity bill which does not contain any of these problematic provisions. Providing access to quality mental health care is an important goal and he is hopeful that the House and Senate will work out the differences in their legislation in a positive way so we can be well on our way to expanding mental health parity.

## **HOPE NOW Alliance Releases Statistics on Efforts to Help Homeowners**

This week, the HOPE NOW Alliance released statistics indicating that since July of last year the organization has helped more than a million distressed homeowners remain in their homes. To date, HOPE NOW has assisted 758,000 homeowners and lenders in developing loan repayment plans. The organization has also helped 278,000 homeowners receive loan modifications. Launched last summer, the HOPE NOW Alliance is a cooperative effort among mortgage counselors, servicers, and lenders designed to maximize outreach efforts to homeowners in danger of foreclosure. For individuals having trouble paying their mortgage, HOPE NOW operates a hotline – 888-995-HOPE – available 24-hours a day to provide absolutely free foreclosure prevention counseling by expert counselors. Congressman Miller commends HOPE NOW for its efforts to return stability to our nation's housing markets and help more Americans maintain the dream of homeownership.

## **Economic Stimulus Rebate Checks Coming Soon**

Under the Economic Stimulus Package approved by Congress last month, individuals with at least \$3,000 in income last year will be eligible to receive a tax rebate check. Starting this week, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) will begin mailing letters to millions of Americans, including disabled veterans and senior citizens on Social Security, as a reminder that even if they do not owe any income taxes they must file a 2007 federal tax return in order to receive a stimulus rebate check. Qualifying income to reach the \$3,000 threshold includes Social Security benefits, Railroad Retirement, disability compensation, pension or survivors' benefits, and wage earnings. Supplemental Security Income (SSI), however, does not count toward this amount. For more information on securing your tax rebate check, please visit the IRS website at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) or call their toll-free number at 800-829-4933.

The Capitol Connection Newsletter is published at the end of every week in which Congress is in session. Please send correspondence to [CapitolConnectionNewsletter@mail.house.gov](mailto:CapitolConnectionNewsletter@mail.house.gov) with your name and residential address. To subscribe or unsubscribe to this newsletter send an email to [CapitolConnectionNewsletter@mail.house.gov](mailto:CapitolConnectionNewsletter@mail.house.gov) or call (202) 225-3201.