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# 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**



May 4, 2007

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## **This Week on the House Floor**

### ***House Votes to Sustain President's Iraq Spending Veto***

On Wednesday, Congressman Miller joined his colleagues in trying to put an end to the political posturing surrounding the Iraq war supplemental appropriations bill by voting to sustain the President's veto. The day before, the President rejected this restrictive spending bill and returned it to Congress for further consideration. In the coming weeks as the House debates this issue further, Congressman Miller looks forward to passing a clean funding bill that fully supports our troops and establishes benchmarks to quantify Iraq's progress toward peace and stability.

### ***Over Congressman Miller's Strong Objections, Hate Crimes Bill Moves on to Senate***

On Thursday, the House approved a constitutionally questionable bill designed to federally define hate crimes and fund their prosecution at the local level. Under the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act, two new categories of federal crime would be created. While certain groups are designated for special protection under the bill, similar protections would not be extended to senior citizens, expectant mothers, members of the military, and a long list of others. Congressman Miller believes firmly that all crimes of violence should be severely punished and all citizens deserve equal protection under the law. He strongly opposed the bill when it came to the House floor and was pleased to hear that the President has threatened to veto the bill should it reach his desk.

## **This Week in Committee**

### ***Bill Approved to Restrict Mexican Truck Access to U.S. Highways***

This week, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee unanimously passed a bill to drastically restrict the Department of Transportation's (DOT) recently announced NAFTA-mandated program that would allow Mexican trucking companies to make deliveries throughout the United States. Under the Safe American Roads Act of 2007, DOT would be required to certify that Mexican trucks and drivers fully comply with all U.S. safety laws, drug and alcohol testing standards, English proficiency requirements, and insurance regulations before they are allowed in the United States. In addition, the bill limits the program to only 1,000 Mexican trucks and ends it after three years. Congressman Miller will work to ensure Mexican truck drivers abide by all immigration and Homeland Security rules before the Department of Transportation is allowed to launch the program. He believes that despite the United States' duty to comply with NAFTA, the safety and security of our roads and communities should not be compromised.

### ***Congressman Miller Works to Make FHA Mortgage Loans Available in Southern California***

For seventy years, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) has provided mortgage products designed to help moderate-income homebuyers achieve the dream of homeownership. However, the program has fallen behind the times and in the 42<sup>nd</sup> District alone, the number of FHA loans has dropped from more than 7,000 to less than 100 in just the last five years. On Thursday, the House Financial Services Committee passed legislation to modernize the FHA program at no cost to taxpayers. Congressman Miller authored two provisions that will help bring FHA back to Southern California. First, the bill increases the price on loans that can be secured through the FHA program. For high cost areas of the country like the Southern California region, the price of an entry-level home far exceeds FHA's current limit of approximately \$360,000. Second, Congressman Miller championed a provision to allow mortgage brokers, who originate the majority of loans in the country, to offer FHA products to their customers. The bill now awaits a vote by the full House of Representatives.

## **This Week in the District**

### ***Passport Applications on the Rise***

The number of passports issued by the State Department has gone up nearly 25 percent in comparison to last year, as citizens seek to comply with new air travel guidelines designed to further secure our borders. The Los Angeles Passport office issued 71,781 passports in March of this year compared to 55,777 in March 2006. Please note that approximate routine processing times are currently ten weeks, while expedited processing is two weeks. If you are having a problem with receiving your passport, please contact Congressman Miller's Brea office at (714) 257-1142.

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