
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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House Passes Expansion of Government-Run Health Care

The House of Representatives on Tuesday voted to dramatically expand the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), which is set to expire at the end of the month. However, rather than refocus SCHIP as a targeted safety net for low-income uninsured children, the House passed a bill to extend coverage to children in families with significantly higher incomes and illegal immigrants. Under this bill, children in middle-class households, 95 percent of whom already have some form of private insurance, will now be eligible for government-run health care. Additionally, a provision was included allowing individuals to receive SCHIP benefits without having to show proof of citizenship, potentially allowing illegal immigrants take advantage of taxpayer funded health care. Congressman Miller was forced to oppose this bill because it will institute government-run health care in middle class America and allow illegal immigrants to further flood our nation's hospitals. As an alternative, Congressman Miller has cosponsored legislation that would extend the SCHIP program for an additional 18 months so that he and his colleagues can work out a solution that avoids undue costs and ensures that the program effectively and efficiently serves its intended purpose of covering our nation's neediest citizens.

Fiscally Irresponsible Expansion of Flood Insurance Approved by House

The House this week also approved a drastic and irresponsible expansion of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Currently, the program protects 5.4 million American consumers against damage caused by flooding. On Thursday, despite Congressman Miller's strong objections, the House approved legislation adding a federal wind insurance program to the NFIP, vastly increasing its scope and risk exposure. In order to pay claims for 2005 hurricanes, the NFIP was already forced to borrow \$17.6 billion from the Treasury, an amount it estimates it will never be able to repay. With more than \$19 trillion of insured value along the Eastern Seaboard and the Gulf Coast alone, this bill threatens massive costs to taxpayers in the event of a major natural disaster. Because of the substantial risk to American taxpayers, Congressman Miller joined more than 140 fiscal conservatives in vigorously opposing this irresponsible legislation. If presented for his signature, the President has threatened to veto the bill.

Congressman Miller Supports Bill to Improve Investment in Small Business

On Thursday, the House overwhelmingly passed legislation to address the growing gap between the capital needs of small business and the Small Business Administration (SBA) programs' ability to meet them. While the SBA's programs have addressed some of the growing needs of the more than 26.8 million small businesses in America, more needs to be done to provide small businesses with access to the capital they need to expand their operations and create new jobs. To address this need, this bill creates the Office of Angel Investment to provide small businesses with improved access to venture capital and other potential sources of investment. The bill also revamps the SBA's New Markets Venture Capital program which helps to revitalize low-income rural and urban areas. Small businesses are the lifeblood of the American economy and Congressman Miller remains committed to ensuring their continued growth.

Legislation Introduced to Help Local Water Agencies Raise Funds

This week Congressman Miller cosponsored legislation to increase the availability of water in Southern California. The bill would allow local municipalities and water agencies to use clean renewable water supply bonds, or CREWS, to finance innovative water supply facilities. These facilities include water-recycling facilities, projects to clean up and use impaired groundwater, and both seawater and brackish groundwater desalination projects. The proceeds from the sale of CREWS would result in an interest free loan to a local water agency. For every \$100 million spent on water supply projects, local water agencies would save more than \$62 million in interest payments. Improving our region's water supply remains a top legislative priority for Congressman Miller. He is committed to working with his colleagues in Congress to finance infrastructure improvements and encourage innovative and alternative approaches to solving Southern California's water supply challenges.