
CAPITOL CONNECTION

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



May 1, 2009

House Passes Conference Report on the FY 2010 Budget Resolution

On Wednesday, the House passed the conference report on the budget resolution for Fiscal Year 2010. Like the Administration's budget proposal, the budget conference report exploits the current economic crisis to advance a sweeping expansion of government and also increases nondefense discretionary spending for Fiscal Year 2010 by nearly ten percent over the enacted 2009 level. To disguise this massive increase in government spending, the conference report for the budget resolution is set over a five year window rather than a ten year window proposed by the Administration. However, the budgetary policies put forth in the resolution will triple the debt to \$17.3 trillion and will reach more than 82 percent of the Gross Domestic Product over the next ten years, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office. The budget also contains the largest tax increases in American history, totaling \$1.5 trillion over the next ten years and allowing for virtually unlimited tax increases through a wish list of new spending programs contained in 34 reserve funds. Congressman Miller joined every House Republican, as well as seventeen Democrats, in voting against this fiscally irresponsible budget and will continue to fight against the gross abuse of taxpayer dollars.

Constitutionally Questionable Hate Crimes Bill Passes House

The House this week 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 strongly opposed the bill when it came to the House floor because he believes firmly that all crimes of violence should be severely punished and all citizens deserve equal protection under the law.

DHS Secretary Seeks to Repeal REAL ID

Last week, Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano stated that she intends to work with governors to repeal the REAL ID Act. Following the tragic events on September 11, 2001, the 9/11 Commission's report found that the nineteen terrorists that murdered thousands of Americans on that fateful day had dozens of state issued driver's licenses and identification cards which were used to board the planes. To enhance national security, the REAL ID Act was enacted in 2005 to ensure that future terrorists no longer have access to legal loopholes to enter and remain at large in the United States. Once implemented, it will establish minimum document and issuance standards for federal acceptance of driver's licenses and state-issued personal identification cards. In addition, the REAL ID Act will require applicants to provide proof they are in the country legally, and tie the expiration date of the documents with the expiration of an alien's authorized term of stay. To date, states have received approximately \$130 million from the federal government for the implementation of REAL ID. Congressman Miller, a cosponsor and strong supporter of the REAL ID Act of 2005, is deeply disappointed and concerned with Secretary Napolitano's plan to repeal this important legislation and will fight to keep this necessary national security program.

Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative and Swine Flu Update

Beginning June 1, 2009, the final phase of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) will be in effect. From this date forward, all U.S. citizens entering the United States through land borders or sea ports-of-entry must present a U.S. passport, passport card, or other travel document approved by the Department of Homeland Security. Advanced planning in securing necessary travel documents is highly recommended as the number of applications is expected to rise significantly. For further information on WHTI, including a list of approved travel documents, please visit the Department of State website at www.travel.state.gov. Also, in response to the swine flu, Congressman Miller would like to encourage all constituents to stay updated on the latest news pertaining to the virus. For more information, including preventative measures and the latest updates, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/swineflu or call 1800-CDC-INFO.

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