
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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Background Checks Eliminated for Thousands of Green Card Applicants

Due to the rapidly growing backlog of immigration cases, United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced this week that it will grant permanent residency to tens of thousands of legal U.S. immigrants without first completing required background checks. This change comes despite legislation signed into law just weeks ago specifically requiring the USCIS to complete background checks in order to grant an immigration benefit, such as a green card. Instead, USCIS has determined unilaterally that only a name and fingerprint check will be necessary. Congressman Miller is outraged that USCIS has taken this step to weaken national security in clear opposition to the intent of Congress. In the weeks ahead he will continue working with his colleagues in Congress to overturn this misguided decision.

Congressman Miller Hails End to Oral Declarations of Citizenship at Border

Congressman Miller would like to commend the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for eliminating the practice of accepting oral declarations of citizenship for entry into our country. Beginning January 31, 2008, as part of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative, DHS began requiring U.S. citizens to present a government-issued photo ID plus proof of United States citizenship at all U.S. land and sea ports of entry. For instance, a U.S. passport or the combination of a driver's license plus a birth certificate would meet this requirement. In the past, when entering the country by land or sea all that was needed was a photo ID and a promise that the individual is an American citizen. Between 2005 and 2007, 31,000 people were caught making false oral claims of citizenship, but many more likely slipped across our borders undetected. Congressman Miller is pleased that DHS has enacted this long overdue, commonsense solution to shore up security along our borders.

Legislation Introduced Condemning Rocket Attacks on Israeli Citizens

Congressman Miller this week cosponsored legislation condemning recent rocket attacks on the people of Israel. Since Israeli forces withdrew from the Gaza Strip in 2005, more than 4,000 rockets and mortar shells have been fired at Israeli citizens by Hamas and other terrorist organizations. More than 400 of those attacks have taken place since the beginning of this year alone. The measure introduced before the House condemns these cowardly attacks in the strongest possible terms and expresses support for the right of Israel to defend its territory against attack. The measure also reaffirms the strong and unyielding friendship between the people of the United States and Israel. In the face of continuing violence in the Middle East which has already claimed too many lives, Congressman Miller believes that the United States must stand firmly behind one of our closest allies and speak out forcefully against all parties who stand in the way of peace.

Lawmakers Commend Marine Corps Recruiters

Earlier this month, the Berkeley City Council passed a resolution labeling members of the United States Marines Corps as "uninvited and unwelcome intruders" and encouraging the citizens of Berkeley to disrupt the work of military recruiters. In response to this act of disrespect for our nation's men and women in uniform, Congressman Miller was proud this week to cosponsor legislation reaffirming the commitment of the United States House of Representatives to the patriotic and professional men and women serving in the United States Marine Corps. The measure also condemns the City of Berkeley, California for its treatment of United States Marines. Congressman Miller is pleased that, in response to mounting pressure, Berkeley has since withdrawn its disrespectful resolution. He believes that our men and women in uniform deserve our utmost respect and admiration for protecting our freedoms and our country.